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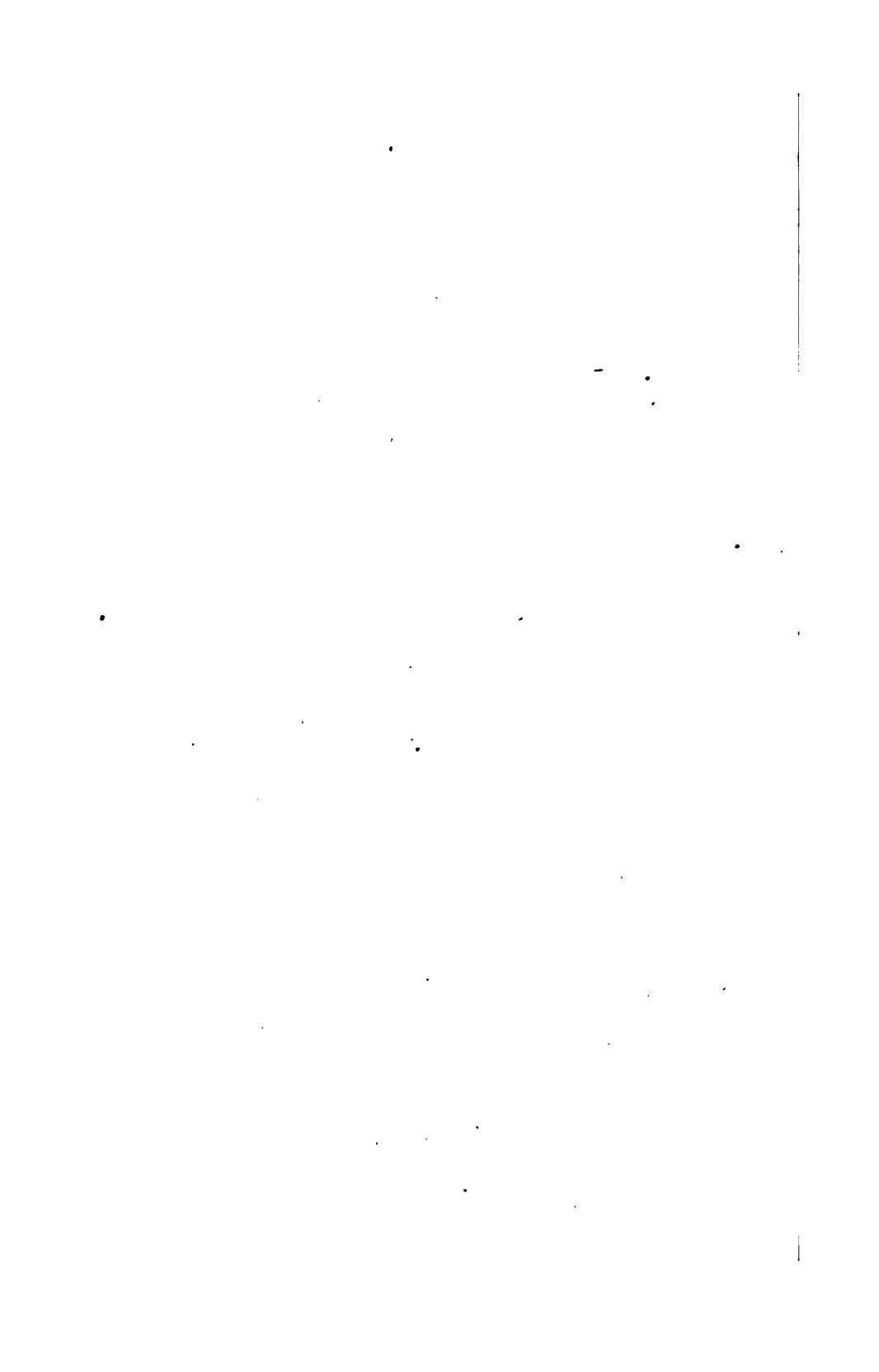




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HENRY SMEATON:

A JACOBITE STORY

OF

THE REIGN OF GEORGE THE FIRST.

BY

G. P. R. JAMES, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF "THE GIPSY," "THE FORGERY,"
"THE WOODMAN," "THE OLD OAK CHEST,"
"RICHELIEU," ETC., ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
T. C. NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE

1851.

24g. w. g.



HENRY SMEATON.

CHAPTER I

By the side of the large piece of water in
the middle of St. James's Square—

“ There is no large piece of water in
St. James's Square. It is a very small
one.”

But there was at the time I speak of,
namely, the year 1715; and if you

will allow me to go on, you shall hear all about it.

By the side of the large piece of water in St. James's Square, looking at the playing of the fountain, (which was afterwards congealed into a great ugly statue,) and watching the amusements of a gay boy and girl, who had come out of one of the houses—I think it was Lord Bathurst's—and were rowing about in the pleasure-boat on the water, stood a man of some six or seven and twenty years of age, dressed in a garb which did not very well indicate his profession, although the distinctions of costume were in those days somewhat closely attended to. His garments, of a sober colour, were very plain, but very good. Especial care seemed to have been taken to avoid every thing in the least degree singular, or which could attract attention ; and it was more easy to say what the wearer was not, than what he was. He was not a Presbyterian minister, although

the cut and colouring of his clothing might have led one to believe that he was so ; for he wore a sword. The same mark showed that he was not an artisan, but did not so precisely prove that he was not a trader ; for more than one shopkeeper in those days assumed the distinctive mark of a higher class when he got from behind his counter and went into a part of the town where he was not known. Yet, had he been one of this butterfly tribe, the rest of his apparel would have seemed more in accordance with his assumed rank.

He was not a courtier ; for where was the gold, and the lace, and the embroidery ? He was not a physician ; for there was no red roquelaure, no gold-headed cane ; and who could pretend to call himself doctor without such appendages ?

He seemed to have been riding, too ; for he had large boots on ; and his hat and coat were somewhat dusty. In every other respect, he was a very indefinite sort of personage ; but yet, of three nursery-

maids who passed him consecutively, taking out children for an airing, as it is called—as if there was any such thing as air in London—two turned their heads, to have another look at his face; and one stopped by the posts which fenced the water, and, while affecting to contemplate the same objects as himself, gave a simpering look towards him, as if to intimate that she had no objection to a little pleasant conversation.

The hard-hearted young man, however, took no notice of her; and she walked on, thinking him a fool, in which she was mistaken.

The Square was now vacant for several minutes, longer, perhaps, than it ever is in the present day, or than it usually was then; but the fact is, that almost all the possessors of houses in the Square, the elder members of their families, and a considerable number of their servants, had gone down to Westminster, to hear the impeachment of Lord Bolingbroke and the

Earl of Oxford. It is true, a footman would occasionally pass from one door to another ; and a cook, with a night-cap on his head, an apron before him, and a knife at his side, was seen to ascend the area-steps of a house in the corner, and look out with an impatient expression of countenance, as if the fish had not arrived, or the butcher had failed in punctuality. The only other persons who appeared in the Square were, the stranger gazing at the children, the children in the boat, and an elderly gentleman who, under the name of tutor, had come out to watch them, but who, seated on a garden chair, had forgotten them, and Bolingbroke and Oxford, and every thing else on earth, in the pages of a book containing select fragments of Hesiod and Pindar.

The sun was shining brightly and warmly into the Square ; the smoky fluid which Londoners mistake for air, tempered the light, and gave a misty softness to the surrounding objects ; and altogether St James's Square seemed a very pleasant

sort of place, considering that it formed part of the suburbs of a great city.

There was nothing remarkable in any man staying there for a few minutes to look about him and enjoy himself, especially if he came through any of the dark dens in which commerce carries on her busy warfare in the heart of London ; for the contrast was very great. But the stranger stayed more than a few minutes. A whole quarter of an hour elapsed without his changing his position, till at length a curious, fantastic-looking man, with a great quantity of riband at his knees and clothing of very gaudy colours, came up to his side, and spoke to him in a low tone.

The new-comer had some excuse for attempting to ornament his person ; which, to say truth, greatly needed it. He was short, probably not more than five feet four inches in height ; but he made up in width, especially across the hips, which would have required the full extent of a Dutchman's nether garment to cover them decently ; and the

late King William III., of blessed memory might well have looked upon him with that favour which he is supposed to have bestowed very liberally upon his countrymen : not indeed that our friend came actually and personally from the shores of Holland, though he certainly looked very like a Dutchman. His features were large and by no means of the most delicate symmetry, the nose having been originally set somewhat awry on the face, and its obliquity being rendered more conspicuous by sundry warts, knots and excrescences, with which indeed the whole of his countenance was amply provided. The eyes, however, were good, large, open, merry blue eyes ; and, though certainly as ugly a personage as one could hope to see, there was yet something—strange to say—very winning in his look, notwithstanding the vast Ramillies wig by which he had contrived to add to his native ugliness.

Approaching from the side of Charing Cross, with a rolling, somewhat consequential

step, this personage advanced to the stranger who had been standing in the square, and accosted him in a familiar tone.

"It is settled, Master Smeaton," he said, speaking in a low voice. "They have carried it by a large majority. It would have done you good to be present. I never saw such attitudes."

"It would have been madness in me to go," replied the other. "Who moved the impeachment?"

"Why that depends upon which impeachment you mean," answered his companion. "Walpole moved against Bolingbroke, with one hand clapped in his coat-pocket and the other stretched out for full five minutes, just like that of my nymph with the flower-basket. I could have sworn it had been cast in lead."

"Little use of impeaching Bolingbroke," observed the young man addressed as Smeaton. "He is safe enough, depend upon it; but it was not of him I thought. Bolingbroke

with all his abilities is useless to any party, and would be detrimental to most. He has contrived to obtain a character for want of principle, which makes most men doubt and fear him."

"Principle, my dear sir!" said the other, with a low laugh, "what is the good of principle? 'Tis but an obstinate adherence to notions once acquired, after the circumstances have changed that rendered them worth having. Principle is a lane with a stone wall on each side and no room to turn the carriage. Principle is one of those cold, hard, stone statues which, when once broken, there's an end of; not like my dear divinities of lead which, shoul I anything go wrong with them, I can throw into the melting-pot again and bring out in a new shape. No, no; give me, in ethics and in art, pliable materials which will make a Jupiter one day and a dancing fawn the next; a Juno now, and then the Queen of Love. Principle, forsooth! Who

has ever heard of principle since the blessed Restoration?"

The young man smiled and mused, and then asked abruptly: "But what of Oxford? Did *that* pass as easily?"

"O yes," replied his companion, "more so, if possible. The hounds are always more eager when the game is in sight. Lord Coningsby did it very well, with grave emphasis and a grand air. Ye gods and goddesses how he did bespatter the noble Earl! He must declare himself now, if ever."

"Is there any good in his declaring himself?" demanded Smeaton. "Many a man declares himself when it is too late. Twelve months ago, he might have done something; now, golden opportunity has slipped through his fingers, and he is powerless. Yet I do believe he is a profound, wise man, if it were not for that vacillating spirit, so often the stumbling-block of great abilities. I have a great

mind to go back to France, Van Noost. I do not like my errand."

"Stay awhile, stay awhile," replied the other. "Just come with me, and you shall soon see whether Oxford is as powerless as you think. You shall have proof positive with your own eyes and ears. If he can but be got to speak and act, the power will not be wanting. I tell you," he added, in a lower tone, "fully three-fifths of all England are firm loyalists ; and every third man, amongst the Whigs, from Marlborough and Sunderland, down to Townley and Chudleigh, would throw up their hats and cry, 'Long live King James !' if they did but see him in the way of prospering. All the common people too, are of one mind."

"Ah, the fickle commons !" said Smeaton, thoughtfully putting his arm through that of his companion. "Where are you going to take me ?"

"Only down to the cockpit," replied Van

Noost, "to see Oxford return from the House."

"Was he there?" asked Smeaton, in a tone of some surprise.

"Yes," answered his companion. "He came down early to the House in case the bill should be brought up at once; and there he sat as cool as a watering-pot. But he must be coming away now, since his impeachment is voted and a committee appointed to draw up the articles."

"He shows firmness in these dangerous circumstances, at least," remarked Smeaton. "Perhaps he may be inclined to show vigor also."

While thus speaking, they had entered Pall Mall, which presented a very different appearance from that which it displays in the present day, as well as from that which it had borne half a century before. There were no longer double rows of trees on the one side and detached houses, with scattered gardens, on the other; but the

buildings were still very irregular ; and, occasionally, an open piece of ground with a tall poplar or two intervened between a princely mansion—such as Marlborough House, or Schomberg House—and a common inn, such as The Sugar-loaf, or Richards's Tavern.

As Pall Mall was, at this time, a favorite place of residence for strangers visiting the metropolis, the thoroughfare was somewhat crowded ; and numerous sedan-chairs were passing along, carrying gentlemen to visits or to chocolate-houses. The footpath, though famous for its mud in wet weather, was now quite dry ; and the feet of the chairmen, as they trotted along in the middle of the road, raised clouds of dust very inconvenient to the eyes.

It might be this circumstance which caused Van Noost's companion to press his hat further over his brows, as he entered this street, and quicken his pace to the discomposure of the other's somewhat jaunty

steps. A distant shout, however, seemed to give wings to good Van Noost's feet ; for, whispering—" Come on—come on here, across, or we shall be too late. He is issuing out of the House. I know the bark of those dirty muzzles well," he darted to the other side of the way ; and, to the surprise of his companion, entered a dingy apothecary's shop, indicated by the sign of a golden pestle and mortar over the door. -

" Good morning, Mr. Gingle," he said, to a man who was pounding something in a very large mortar, and raising an inconceivable smell. " Will you just let us pass by your back way into the park ? My friend and I want to see the Earl of Oxford come up from the House."

" Go on, go on, Van Noost," replied the shop-keeper, sneezing into the mortar, and hardly raising his eyes. " You know the way ; but don't leave the door open.'

With this permission, the two companions hurried on through a little back-par-

lour into a small yard behind the house, and thence, by a doorway in the wall into a narrow passage which led them by some steps into the mall of the park.

As soon as they issued from between the brick walls, the roaring voice of the multitude was again heard, louder and nearer ; and, hurrying forward, they passed up a narrow passage out of the park, the door of which, in the two former reigns, had been kept closed, but which was now generally left open as an entrance from the Spring Gardens. Thence, threading numerous narrow passages amongst low pot-houses, mingled in a strange way with finer buildings, and crossing what was called Cromwell's Yard, they entered the world of coffee-houses and taverns, which, at that time, occupied the space known by the name of Charing Cross. Carriages now roll over ground which, in those days, was covered with numerous dwellings ; but the thoroughfare was not less crowded then

than now ; for the multitude, ever thronging to and fro, was compressed into a narrower space ; and on that day especially, the numbers were so great that it was hardly possible for any one to make his way along the street.

At the moment when the two whom we have mentioned more particularly were added to the rest of the human beings there assembled, a sort of compulsory motion was given to the crowd, some being driven forward in the direction of the Haymarket, and others pushed back against the houses behind them, by the advance of an enormous mob up the centre or carriage-way of the street, in the midst of which might be seen, towering above the ocean of heads, a large, clumsy, but highly ornamented, carriage, drawn by four powerful horses. Hats were waving in the air, handkerchiefs fluttering from many a window ; and several thousand voices were heard shouting all at once, and “ making

the welkin ring." Some cried one thing and some another ; but the general meaning was alike.

One roared forth, " Oxford for ever !" another, " High Church, High Church and Sacheverel !" another, " Down with the Whigs !" and then again might be heard " Ormond, the Duke of Ormond for ever, and away with the Hanover rats !"

Not contented with thus asserting their own temporary opinions, the sturdy ruffians of the mob insisted that all persons whom they passed should give some sign of consenting to the same ; and any one who hesitated seemed likely to be roughly handled.

" Off with your hat, and cry ' Oxford for ever !' " roared one fellow in the garb of a sailor, approaching the spot where Van Noost and Smeaton stood.

The latter did not obey the injunction but remained covered and silent. Van Noost, however, raised his hat and shouted readily ; and the man passed on, swagger-

ing and bawling with his companions, and following the carriage of the Earl of Oxford as it moved slowly forward.

The crowd of more respectable persons, collected at both sides of the street, began then to disperse ; and Van Noost was turning round to walk away with Smeaton when a sharp tap upon his shoulder made him suddenly pause and look behind him. At the same moment, a calm, clear voice with a somewhat sarcastic tone addressed him by name, saying—

“ Well, my good friend, Van Noost, you have shouted loudly for Harley to-day, which is generous, seeing that he has little chance of paying the obligation.”

“ Paid already, my good lord,” replied Van Noost, turning round, not in the least discomposed, and addressing a thin, plainly dressed man of the middle age. “ He bought two nymphs and two dairy maids of me, no longer ago than this time twelve month—size of life—dairy-maids with

pails upon their heads, nymphs with cornucopias in their hands, to say nothing of a little black boy with a dolphin to be put in the middle of a fountain. Surely I am bound to cry ‘ Long live the Earl of Oxford ! ’ If your lordship will patronise me in the like manner—and should you chance to get into a scrape so as to win the applause of the mob, I will throw up my hat and roar, ‘ Long live the Earl of Stair ! ’ with the best of them.”

“ Well, well,” replied the Earl, with a smile, “ only take care what you are doing, my good friend ; for, though being whipped for a libel has often made a bookseller’s fortune, yet the being sent to Newgate for sedition would not greatly benefit a leaden figure-maker, I imagine.”

“ I did it on compulsion, noble Lord,” replied Van Noost, in an indifferent tone. “ I make it a point never to quarrel with a mob ; for I am a curious piece of statuary, not so easily mended as one of my own

figures ; and I don't believe any king on earth would help to mend me if I chanced to get head, or bone, broken by resisting the rabble. Would you not have done the same in my place ?"

" No," replied the Earl, who seemed for some reason willing to prolong the conversation. " I should have done just as this worthy gentleman who is with you did ; kept my hat on, and remained silent. Besides, my good friend, your leanings are well known, although one would have thought that the son of jolly old Van Noost, who came over with King William, would not have inherited a vast store of Jacobitism."

" It was my mother's property I came into," replied Van Noost, with a laugh ; " for, though my father was a Dutchman, my mother was a thorough Englishwoman, Betsy Hall by name. My father never meddled with politics, good man ; but my mother was a staunch Tory, and a wise one ; for she always cried when there was

anything to be got, and held her tongue when there was no use in crying. But how happens your Lordship to be on foot amongst the rabble?" he continued, moving as if to pass the Earl who was right in his way. "Have you not been down to the House to see these gay doings?"

"Not I," replied the Earl of Stair. "My business is to stop intrigues, and not to mix with them."

"A hard cut, that, at your friends, my Lord," said Van Noost, bowing low, and taking off his hat. "Bob Walpole wouldn't thank you, I think."

While this short conversation had been going on, the Earl of Stair had more than once directed his eyes, with a quiet, inquiring glance towards Van Noost's companion. That personage, however, had in an easy manner, without the slightest appearance of effort, contrived to keep his face averted, till the movement of Van Noost in advance obliged him to pass the Earl, who then got a full but momentary view of his counte-

nance. The two then walked on ; and as soon as they were five or six steps distant, Lord Stair beckoned to a man who was standing at the door of the Rummer tavern, and on his running up, whispered to him—

“ Follow the two persons with whom I have been speaking, see whither they go, and watch, for a little, if they soon separate. Then come and tell me.”

Without a word of reply, the man glided away, and soon gained sight of Van Noost and Smeaton as they walked on. He kept at a certain distance behind them, dogged them round the corners of streets, sometimes crossed over the way, and watched them from the opposite side, sometimes even passed them, and then stopped to look at something that seemed to attract his attention. As the crowd in the streets diminished, however, his office became more difficult of execution ; and his manœuvres were speedily detected by a quick eye that was upon him.

“ There is a man following us, Van

Noost," said Smeaton, in a low tone, just as they were entering Piccadilly. "He has dogged us ever since we left Charing Cross."

"He is watching you, not me," answered Van Noost, with a laugh. "My character and domicile are too well known to need watching. See what it is to have an established reputation. But you must not go home, for that might be dangerous. Come on to my little place—I will provide you such dinner as I can give, and will get you out the back way, after dark. In the meantime, we can talk over what is next to be done with Oxford."

The other did not reply, but walked on with his companion. They took their way straight up Piccadilly, which was then still frequently called the Reading Road. Towards the top of the Haymarket, Piccadilly bore somewhat the appearance of a street, although a great number of the first houses were inns for the accommodation of strangers coming to London; but as one pro-

ceeded in a westerly direction, the country gained the day over the town; and Piccadilly wore much the appearance of that suburb called Kensington Gore. On the right hand especially, were many splendid mansions, surrounded by large gardens, affecting a rural air, commencing, I believe, with the houses of Sir John Clarges and Lady Stanhope, and going on with Queensbury House, Burlington House, Sir Thomas Bond's house, (through part of which has been carried the well-known Bond-street,) Berkeley House, with its splendid garden, and several others, built and decorated at an expense, and with a degree of luxury, far beyond the means of any but a very few of our wealthiest countrymen of the present day.

Beyond these splendid mansions, as the two walked on towards Hyde Park, came a very different class of houses, not in continuous rows, though here and there two or three were even then beginning to lean their shoulders together as if for mutual

support. Between the buildings were still gardens, and even fields; and the houses themselves seldom soared above the rank of the dwelling of some inferior artist, or some low public-house or waggoner's inn, of which last there was an immense number, under signs which are still perpetuated in the names of streets: the Half Moon, the Black Horse, the White Horse, the Crown, the Dog and Duck, etc. Round the doors of these, and on the benches before them, a number of people were congregated, all talking and debating, and generally discussing politics; for the Englishman has been, during many ages, rather a political than a politic animal, easily led in any course, it is true, by one who knows his weak points; but having a wonderfully good opinion of his own capacity, notwithstanding; and firmly convinced that he is fit for the rule and governance of states. The names of Harley, Ormond, Bolingbroke, Walpole, Coningsby, Cowper, met the ear at every step; but, without appa-

rently taking any notice, Smeaton and his companion walked on, still dogged by the man who had been set to watch their proceedings, and who kept on the other side of the way, under shadow of the trees.

About a hundred yards beyond the grove of trees surrounding the reservoir, but on the other side of the Reading Road, they came to a house, standing a little back, with a paved court before it, and of which the upper half of the lower and the lower half of the upper windows were covered by an immense sheet of painted canvass, representing a variety of curious looking utensils mingled with figures of men and women, some in a state of nudity, and some clothed in the quaint and starched fashion of the day, while an inscription underneath announced that Jacob Harris constructed, repaired, and kept in order, fountains of every kind, size, and description, and made chairs and garden-seats, ruined temples and summer-houses, with various other devices for the ornamenting

of parks, pleasure-grounds, and gardens. The description of his talents was long and minute ; but Van Noost seemed to hold them in but small esteem ; for, as he passed by, and cast his eyes upon the inscription, he said, with a sort of grunt—

“ Ha ! he’s forced to come to me for all his statuary. He can’t do that.”

Some three or four hundred yards farther on, every step giving the country greater predominance over the town, and a little on this side of the spot, where Apsley House now stands, was a small dwelling of two low stories, retreating from the high road, and having a garden before it of about a quarter of an acre in extent. This garden was ornamented with various fruit trees, the medlar, the mulberry, and the ditch-loving elder tree, notorious for its wine ; but the principal decoration consisted in a whole host of figures, as large as life, cast in lead, and by no means ill-executed. One might have thought that a living mob

had taken possession of the garden, had not the heterogeneous costume of the figures themselves denoted their real nature. Almost all of them were painted "to the life." Here were soldiers presenting their firelocks as if in the act of shooting at you ; dairy maids and country lasses with baskets on their heads, long boddices, and gowns tucked through the pocket holes ; mowers whetting their scythes—old Time amongst the rest ; negroes, kneeling and supporting sundials, "very black and beautiful," as dear Washington Irving says in his negro cosmogony ; to say nothing of fair-skinned nymphs as naked as they were born. The garden was shut in from the road by a rustic fence, with a small gate in the centre ; and before that gate Van Noost stopped, and opened it for his companion to pass in.

As soon as Smeaton had entered the garden, the statuary (for so I suppose we must call him,) paused and looked round.

He instantly perceived the man who had followed them, planted on the opposite side of the way ; and, carefully locking the gate, he followed his companion through his grove of leaden figures, pointing out to him, with the mingled affection of a parent and an artist, the various excellences of his own productions. He had no modesty upon the subject—it was a quality indeed which did not greatly embarrass him on any subject, and, probably, Praxiteles did not value the immortal works of his hand, whether in marble or ivory, so highly as Jacob Van Noost estimated his own productions.

“ See that Apollo,” he exclaimed, pointing to a figure of the Belvidere God. “ I have caught the fire and the spirit, you see ; and, as for the grace, I think I may venture to say that the little elevation which I have given to the left arm greatly increases it, as well as the dignity.”

Smeaton walked on with more speed than was quite flattering to his companion. He was a good-natured creature, however,

Van Noost ; and he merely gave his shoulders a slight shrug, hurried his own pace, and, arriving before the other at the little old green blistered door, threw it open to give him admission, pointing with his hand, at the same time, to the entrance of a small parlour, the clean-washed and neatly sanded floor of which you reached by descending a single step. He then shut and locked the house-door, hung up his hat upon a peg behind it, and, entering the parlour, placed a chair for his guest, with a low bow, saying—

“ Here you are safe, my lord ; and here you had better remain till the grey of the evening. Ay, your noble father often sat in that chair, speaking bad Dutch against my father’s bad English, examining his beautiful models, and choosing out such as he wished to possess.”

CHAPTER II.

WE will now move, for a while, to a far distant scene, and go back to a somewhat earlier period of the year ; for, having a violent objection to all stiff rules, I cannot even consent to bind myself by the very good advice of Count Antoine Hamilton—“*Mon ami, toujours commencez par le commencement,*” in which he differed from Horace, and a great many wonderful men of old.

On the western coast of England, and

in one of the most beautiful parts of that beautiful coast, is a spot which I must describe, not only for the benefit of those who may profit by it, or of those who may love to identify any place they read of, with some place which they remember or imagine, but because many of the principal events of my tale occurred in the midst of that precise scene. Those who know the sea-board of Devonshire will I think, have no difficulty in recognizing the locality from certain distinctive marks.

The place to which I allude is a little bay, taking somewhat the form of a horse-shoe, and indenting the land deeply. It is formed by a high headland, on the south western side, which shelters it from the prevailing winds. The face of this promontory, to its very extreme point, is one precipitous cliff of cold grey stone, varying from six to nine hundred feet in height, rugged and broken indeed, but apparently pathless; and bold would be

the man who should attempt to scale it ; still bolder he who should seek to descend from the height above. This is called Ale Head ; and the opposite limb of the bay consists of another promontory, not so steep or precipitous, indeed, but still lofty and scarped enough, which bears the name of Ale Down. Neither does it project so far into the sea from the general line of coast, which trends away to the eastward at no very abrupt angle. Protected thus on three sides by very high ground, and with only a somewhat narrow opening in one direction, the waters of that bay, during the greater part of the year, are as soft and tranquil as a dream of Heaven ; but they are very deep also, for the cliffs run down far below the low water-mark. Standing on the heights above, I have looked down, and beheld the sea lying beneath my feet, as smooth as a mirror and as blue as a sapphire. A hundred-gun ship could anchor in that bay, within pistol-shot of the cliffs of Ale Head.

Between the higher promontory and the lower, however, is a deep dell. I must not call it a valley; for the sides are too steep, and the concavity too narrow, to admit of that name. Down this dell, flows a strong deep stream of beautifully clear water, over a rocky bed, from which a large quantity of sand is carried down, forming a soft, dry landing-place, where the dell opens upon the bay. This little beach is not at all extensive, being, from the foot of the rock on the one side to the base of the hill on the other, not more than two hundred yards wide, and perhaps forty in depth. Through the centre of it flows the stream into the sea; and twice a day, ocean comes up to meet its tributary, covering by far the greater part of the sands.

There were then, and are now—at least, I have never seen it without—some five or six boats hauled up on the shore, giving the first intimation which one receives on entering Ale Bay from the seaward, that that wild

and lonely scene has human habitations near. But so it is ; and on each side of the little river, commencing at about a hundred yards from the mouth, and ending about a quarter of a mile farther up the dell, are built a number of fishermen's cottages, pressed between the steep hill side on the one hand and the deep banks of the stream on the other. At various places down the dell, too, little bridges are built across from bank to bank ; sometimes merely the trunk of a tree flattened on the side that lies uppermost—sometimes an ill-turned arch of roughly hewn stone. These are all foot bridges, I need hardly say ; for horse, cart, or carriage, never, I believe, ventured so far down the valley.

The next object, speaking of human life which you see after the boats, on entering the bay, is the end of the lowest fisherman's hut, peeping out through the opening of the valley ; but a moment or two afterwards, as you pull on, you will perceive upon the side of the hill to the south-west, if you raise your

eyes in that direction, the gables and chimneys of a large old mansion, rising above a wood of considerable extent and luxuriance which clothes the valley nearly to the shore, for in that favoured climate vegetation does not shrink from the sea air ; and at no great distance may be seen the trees actually dipping their branches in the waves. They wisely eschew, however, the cutting winds upon the hill top ; and the high summit of Ale Head is as bare as the back of a tortoise, and well nigh as brown.

We must look a little more closely at the mansion, however. Let us suppose, then, that we have landed by the side of the stream, crossed the dry sands, and entered the little dell, with light clouds floating rapidly over head and making the blue bay and the grey cliffs, and the brown downs above, sparkle with gleams like the sweet transitory hopes that brighten, as they pass, the hard, stern features of this earthly life. Oh ye bright visions of ima-

gination, could one but grasp and arrest ye for an hour, how much happier, how much better, might man be!—what a different thing were life! But ye are of air, and only given us, in this stormy scene, to assure the sad and tempest-beaten heart, that there is still sunshine above the clouds.

Walking on before the fishermen's cottages, along the very, very narrow path, we come to a spot where the road extends, but is no longer carried on upon both sides of the stream. It mounts, too; the valley becomes less deep, more wide. The left, or south-western side, is covered with wood; the right slopes up sharply, clothed with short, green sward. Suddenly, at about half-a-mile from the bay, a road branches off to the left, while that, which you have been pursuing by the bank of the stream, widens out and becomes a good, sound carriage-road. We must take the left hand road, however, which, forming an acute angle

with the path by which we have arrived, seems as if its ultimate point, or terminus, as we should now corruptly call it, was destined to be the very highest and farthest part of the promontory of Ale Head. But it has no such ambitious notions ; and, after rising somewhat abruptly for a little way, it runs on towards the sea, with a very slight inclination upwards, winding through the wood till, with a sharp turn to the right, it passes between two gates of hammered iron-work, supported upon stone columns, with large, round globes on the top. Then come two or three little glades in a slight hollow of the hill, and then the old mansion, standing on a somewhat higher point. How can one describe it ? It is but a collection of innumerable gables, and walls, and windows, built in the reign of Elizabeth, added to in the reign of James, left to go to decay during the Commonwealth, repaired and re-decorated under Charles II. It is all of the grey stone of

the country ; but the sea air, and the proximity of the woods, have tinged it with many colours, so that its aspect is not that of a venerable old man who has passed his life in peace and tranquillity, but rather like the weather-beaten face of an old sailor, bronzed and tinted by the wind and tempests.

Within, are many rooms and many passages ; flights of steps go down, apparently merely for the purpose of going up again ; and you are continually meeting doors and new rooms where nobody expected them. But many of these rooms are very handsome—spacious, lofty, and well-formed ; and though, to say the truth, they would be more lightsome and cheerful were they not generally panelled with walnut or black oak—yet there is something fine and impressive in that dark, carved wainscoting ; and, when the sunshine steals in and brightens it, it is like a sweet smile upon the face of age.

In one of these large, handsome rooms

upon the first floor above the ground, on a spring day in 1715, sat a girl of about eighteen years of age, in the dress of a high-born lady of that time. I need not, and had better not, describe it ; for it was as stiff and ugly a costume as ever was invented by the capricious taste of man. The character of an epoch is always displayed in the dress of the generation ; and what could be expected from the dry galantry of Louis the Fourteenth's latter days, and the stiff decorum of George the First's ? Nevertheless, the most hard and unbending garments in which that fairform could been-cased, could never have repressed its wild grace or shackled its free, light movements. Her maid complained that she burst more boddice laces than any lady in the country ; and it is a certain fact that her hair contrived to disentangle itself from combs and fillets, and sport in the wind like wreaths of smoke, more frequently than she herself wished or even knew. How it happened, she could not tell, and she

gave herself no great trouble to enquire ; for her mind was often wandering after other things, sometimes with the eager sportiveness of a child after a butterfly, sometimes with steady and untiring thought, like a wayfarer on a long journey.

It must be said, too, in justice to her good taste, that she abhorred the vile fashions of the day in which she lived, and would often stand and contemplate the portraits of Vandyke, of which there were several in the house, or other older pictures still, and wonder by what curious process the mind of man had been led to abandon what is flowing and beautiful for that which is rigid and ugly. There was a refuge, however, even in the costume of those times, which saved part of the day from being spent in durance vile ; and this was in what ladies called their night-clothes. The term, it is true, was a deceit ; and the words, "night-clothes," meant merely a light and easy morning-dress, in which they often spent the early

hours of the day before they dressed for parks and promenades. It was put on as soon as they rose in the morning, in exchange for the garments in which they had really passed the night. Sometimes they even went out in those, wrongly called, "night-clothes" before the conventional hour for appearing in public had arrived.

The young lady I have brought before the reader sat a little out of the sunbeams, which, pouring in, and painting the floor with moving tracery, fell also over the table before her ; but her eyes could reach the blue sky and catch the clouds wafted over it, as with silent speed they hurried along upon the wings of the wind. It was very still and quiet in that wide, high room. The birds could be heard singing without ; the busy little flies, those most wonderful pieces of mechanism, buzzed about the windows ; and a clock at the top of the stairs ticked faintly. But these were all the sounds ;

and they seemed only to soothe the silence.

The lady stirred not, spoke not, but sat with her elbow leaning on the table, her cheek, warmly tinged with the rose, resting upon her white hand, the “fringed curtains of her eyes” raised up, and the bright, soft, hazel orbs themselves elevated towards the deep sunshiny heavens. A book was on the table ; but she read it not. There was a mandolin in the corner ; but she touched it not. Her thoughts were very busy ; and her heart was with her thoughts. Yet the images, the questions, the answers which were presented to her mind, touched not upon those topics which any one who did not know her would suppose. She was in the bright expanding time of life, the spring of existence, when the opening bosom of the rose courts the bee. But yet she thought not of love. She knew it not ; hardly by name, not at all by sensation, although the young heart will

yearn for that which was the only want in Eden's garden when Adam was first formed. It was not of the gay ball, the play, the promenade, or any of the fashionable amusements of the day ; for of them she was as ignorant as of love ; but problems which have puzzled many an aged philosopher were present to her mind, though not stated in the most philosophical manner. Wildly and strangely they rose, like the fantastic forms of clouds ; and she chased them eagerly in thought, as a child chases the fleeting shadows that mock his speed.

"What am I ?" she asked herself. " Of what strange elements composed ? Body and spirit, soul and mind ! What are these things ? Is the body the spirit's slave, or the spirit's jailor—servant or master ? I can perceive nothing but what it will permit me to perceive. Through its means must be all my communications with things animate or inanimate. There it rules and tri-

umphs. There it is the tyrant, the jailor ; and yet I can close my eyes, and the spirit, as if free from its hard bondage, can wing its flight afar into that bright, blue sky, and question the heavens as to what is between myself and them. Can it be that the human race is the great pausing point of God's creation, and that between us and Him there is one vast void, untenanted, inanimate ? Or is yonder wide expanse of air, the stars, the heavens, the universe, peopled with beings that I see not ? Are there spirits in those clouds that skim like ivory chariots through the sky ? Are there creatures of light and joy, now sporting with the sun-beams, or resting under the green leaves of the wood ? If so, is it possible that there is no means of communication between me and them, that this body is a barrier between the spirit that I feel within it, and the host of spirits thronging around me ? Strange, strange existence ! what art thou, what am I ?"

On went the mind in the same course, inquiring, eager, keen, but untutored and unsatisfied. All the great problems of human existence seemed to crowd upon imagination and demand an answer from that which cannot give it.

These were strange thoughts for a girl of eighteen ; but yet perhaps not unnatural for a quick and active spirit in the circumstances which surrounded her. The heart had no occupation to give ; and it was impossible that imagination could rest idle. They were strange thoughts certainly ; but such were the thoughts of Emmeline.

She was without companionship. She had none whom she could call friends around her. The poor fishermen of the village of Ale were her nearest neighbours. There was none in the house with her with whom she could exchange thought. It had been so during many years ; and her mind carried her back to little else

than the same state. Far, far away, in the distant past, images like phantoms were seen by the eye of memory—sweet and pleasant images, too, but faint and ill-defined : beings that she loved, forms that hung over her with affection, voices that sounded musical even in remembrance ; but she saw them as through a glass : she could not approach nearer ; she could not trace them more distinctly. It was like the sight of a distant land beheld across the sea, pleasant to view, but not to be reached, with the waves flowing between the beholder and it.

After that, and after a succeeding period of darkness, in which she perceived nothing, the figure of a venerable old man, the poor curate of the parish, came on her memory. She remembered him well. He had taught her much, and had seemed to regard her with peculiar tenderness and affection. He had instructed her to think, and to delight in thought ; to read, and to

ponder on what she read ; for she had never received what may be called the trifling parts of a woman's education. Masters, it is true, had been procured for her from neighbouring towns ; but they were dull, heavy, material teachers. The only one who had really instructed her was that old clergyman. But now he was gone, and she was without a guide ; for the man who had succeeded was a fat and jovial priest who loved the material much more than the mental, and whose weekly sermon laid a heavier burden on the shoulders of his spirit than it was well able to bear. He sought not to acquire or to communicate knowledge, except as to where good wine was given or good punch brewed, or where, and at what hour, the savoury haunch was roasted.

I have said that the old clergyman had taught her much ; but there was one subject on which he had taught her nothing : her own fate and history. He had studiously avoided it ; suffering—perhaps unwillingly,

but still intentionally—the facts of the past to drop from memory. She had sometimes inquired, it is true ; but he had always stopped her gravely ; and circumstances had occurred to make her think even at the early age of fourteen, which she had reached when he died, that he had been bound by some promise to forbear all such information. She even sometimes suspected that his silence as to her history was part of a compact—the condition on which he was permitted to visit and instruct her.

But with whom was the compact ? Probably with that swarthy man who is now walking on the terrace below, booted and spurred as for a journey, and waiting for his horses to be brought round. There is nothing very remarkable in his appearance. His face is not forbidding, his features not ill-formed, though the eyes are perhaps somewhat too near together, and the pupils too small, as if they were always in excess of light. He is about the middle height, stout,

but not corpulent, and perhaps fifty years of age. His air and manner are those of a gentleman, his dress rich and costly. He is altogether a good-looking middle-aged man, but with a certain look of over-shrewdness that might perhaps warn men to be careful in their dealings with him. This is Sir John Newark, the possessor of Ale Manor-House and estates.

Emmeline could not remember when she had first seen him. It was too far back for memory; but she knew that she was not his child. She *felt* it too; and he always called himself her guardian. By that term, he did not mean her tyrant; for he was kind to her, as kind as a man of a cold, calculating, selfish nature, could be. Nor was he altogether an unpleasant companion; for, though he had not the slightest spark of imagination, and fancy with him was a bird without wings —though he could not even comprehend the existence of imagination in others, and

still less any of the generous and thoughtless impulses of the heart—yet he had a good stock of information upon many subjects, conversed well, and had seen a great deal of the world.

He did not in the least understand the character of Emmeline ; but yet, as I have said, he was kind to her, and even indulgent. She had her horses to ride, her servants to attend upon her. She was allowed to roam about, through the woods, over the hills, down to the fishermen's cottages, and even to the neighbouring towns. All the restraints he placed upon her, were such as the customs of society in that day justified, if they did not require. She was not permitted to visit any house, unless accompanied by an elderly woman, whom he had placed about her, and who acted the part of duenna with much skill and discretion. When she went to the small town of Seaford, she was always well accompanied, and was never out of sight of some one, except

while in Ale Manor-House or Park. There she was at full liberty; and she enjoyed it.

It must not be supposed that she thought Sir John's restraints very hard : she knew that they were in some degree customary ; and he had always good reasons to give for every regulation. He would often talk with her on such subjects in the evening, when they sat alone ; but there were two or three points which he strove to impress strongly upon her mind, and which created doubts and enquiries ; for I must not call them suspicions. He had a great dislike to foreigner—no matter what their class ; and when any even of the fishermen or smugglers from the Coast of France visited the little village of Ale, as was sometimes the case, he enjoined Emeline strictly to hold no communication with them, but to keep herself within the walls of the Park, and to receive nothing from their hands, even though sent as a present.

" You are not fond of gauds or laces, Emmeline," he would say; " that I know right well; but you might think it discourteous to refuse any little gift, presented with the grace which all these men have. Remember, however, these things are never offered without an object, and that generally an evil one."

At first, when she was very young, she listened to these injunctions with unquestioning reverence; but as she grew older and read much, she began first to doubt whether he was not prejudiced, and then, from his constant recurrence to the same theme, to imagine that he had some motive which he did not utter; for she had already discovered, by his dealings with others, that he seldom acted or spoke without a personal object. We too often forget that we teach children our own characters, as well as other things, and that each day is a lesson.

One evening, when perhaps, such thoughts were in her mind, she said, in a musing

sort of way, that she should like to see foreign lands and foreigners in their own country. The start that he gave alarmed her ; but he answered nothing at the time, remaining, during the whole of the rest of the evening, in deep and somewhat gloomy reverie.

The night following, however, he returned to the subject himself, speaking in a grave but kindly tone, and evidently upon a plan. It seemed as if he had made up his mind to enter upon a subject which he would rather have avoided, and had weighed every word he was to utter.

“ You told me last night, Emmeline,” he said, “ that you should like to visit foreign countries. You know not what you wish, my child. To do so would be your destruction.”

“ Then I will wish it no longer,” she answered, with a bright look, followed by a momentary shade as she added—“ But I did not know, I had not heard, that foreigners were so wicked, or their lands

so evil. Indeed, I had read of many a high and noble act amongst them, and fancied they were much like Englishmen, only speaking another tongue."

"Far different, Emmeline, and far inferior," answered Sir John Newark ; "but, if that were all, I should little care, and would take you readily to some gay foreign court to let you judge of the difference."

"I have seen no courts as yet," replied Emmeline, "and little wish to see them."

"You shall soon," said her guardian ; "for it is needful that every woman should see courts who is destined to move in the higher sphere of life. But, to return to what I was saying. To visit foreign lands might be—nay, inevitably would be—your destruction. Some time ere long, and certainly when you marry, I will tell you the whole history of your family. It would be improper now to do so ; but thus much I may tell you, that there are pertinacious enemies of your race living beyond the seas, whose

anxious, dearest wishes would be gratified if they could but get you into their power."

"What would they do with me?" asked Emmeline, simply.

The question seemed to puzzle him; and he paused for an instant, in dark meditation.

"I cannot tell," he said; "but all I know is, that they have ruined many by their schemes. You are the last that remains to destroy. They might indeed," he added, in a thoughtful, considering tone, "they might indeed, in consideration of your youth and innocence, restrain themselves to shutting you up in a convent, never to come forth again."

"That would be worse than death," replied Emmeline.

But he went on, not seeming to listen to her.

"Their object might be attained by that means as well as by others; and it is, probably, the course they would take, if they could

make all so sure and irrevocable that no chance of your ever appearing again in the world would be left. If they could put you to this living death, they might be content."

Emmeline shuddered, and gazed at him with a look of fear.

" My only care is for you, dear child," he went on to say. " So long as I live, I will defend and protect you. When you are married, your husband, whoever he may be, will do the same ; but till then, be warned, my Emmeline. Avoid, as you would a person with the plague, all persons from beyond the seas ; for there is no art nor violence to which your enemies would not have recourse, if they saw even a chance of success. Hitherto, *I* have guarded you, and will continue to do so ; but you are old enough now to take precautions on your own behalf. I have warned you of the danger : keep it ever in mind, and strive to avoid it by every means in your power."

Emmeline answered not, but remained with her eyes cast down and her fair brow bent, as if in earnest thought, till he asked, somewhat sharply—

“Do you hear me, Emmeline? I said, ‘strive to avoid this danger by every means.’”

“I will, I will indeed,” exclaimed Emmeline, clasping her hands together; but, the next instant, she burst into tears, and ran out of the room.

Her guardian’s only observation to himself was—

“It has had more effect than I expected; but it is quite as well.”

Great, indeed, was the effect; for it produced the first fear her mind had ever known. She was not aware till then thatshe had an enemy upon earth. Every human being seemed to love her; all had been kind to her: even the rude, dull, obtuse son of her guardian, a lad about seventeen years of age, somewhat deficient in intellect, was

fond of, and gentle with, her ; and, when at home (which was seldom ; for he was kept at a school in London in the hope of strengthening and brightening his dull and feeble mind.) Emmeline could do anything with him. He would sit beside her, choosing by preference a footstool near her feet, listening to all she said, talking to her in return, and seeming to gain some brightness from her light. All had seemed friendly to her ; all had seemed kind. But now she found she had an enemy—an enemy of the most dark and irreconcileable kind—an enemy without a cause. It was very terrible to her ; and even the vagueness of the information she had received—the dark, obscure hints, which merely shadowed forth the passions, and the danger, and the person, added to the horror. It was in vain she attempted to nerve her heart against all fears, or to scan the things which surrounded her in order to discover where any real peril lay, and of

what nature it was : her mind was like a timid person wandering in the dark, and casting his eyes round only to find objects of terror for the sight of fancy. All she knew was, that she had an enemy, dark, mysterious, malignant ; but that was quite enough to depress, and agitate, and terrify her.

The heart of youth, however, has a restorative power which does not easily fail ; and the effect of the words which had been spoken to her, though permanent, was greatly softened during the two or three months which had passed since their utterance. She had taken refuge in thoughts and fancies : she had read more than before, dreamed more—waking, I mean—and had found solace in such occupations. She confined herself more to the park, however ; seemed anxious to have more people with her when she went beyond its precincts ; and kept altogether to the

house, unbidden, for two whole days, when she was told that a foreign cutter was in Ale Bay. Her guardian remarked this conduct, and was well pleased; and now, when he was setting out for London upon business which seemed of importance, from the thoughtful brow which he bore for two days before his departure, he left her, convinced that the apprehensions which he had instilled would act as perfect safeguards during his absence. As she sat there, gazing up towards the sky, Emeline did not know that he was actually about to depart; for he was not fond of leave-takings, and seldom said farewell, when he went away. A minute or two after, however, she heard the sound of the feet of several horses, and running to the window, saw Sir John Newark in the act of mounting, with two or three servants around him, and a pack-horse held by a man on foot. Her guardian raised his eyes to the window as soon as he was in the

saddle; and Emmeline waved her hand, saying, "Adieu!" He merely nodded his head, however, and rode away, leaving her the mistress of the house, and *apparently* of her own actions.

CHAPTER III

We must now return to the little parlour of Van Noost, the leaden-statue maker, and suppose that an hour or two has passed since we left him and his companion there together. We have but paused, indeed, to tell a story by the way. In the meantime, Van Noost had rolled about from one part of his house to the other, eager to show every sort of hospitality and attention to his guest. He had called a somewhat buxom cook to conference in his work-

shop, and had whispered instructions and directions to a man and two or three boys who aided him in his labours, and who instantly issued forth, by the back door of the house, upon what may justly be termed a foraging expedition, taking their way towards Mayfair and Shepherd's market; though be it understood that Mayfair then actually consisted of fields, on which the fair, till within late years, had been held. In the immediate neighbourhood were a number of public-houses, taverns, and eating-shops, of which one was the notorious Dog and Duck.

Notwithstanding all the precautions he had taken, good Van Noost thought fit to apologise beforehand for the scantiness and meanness of the only fare which he should have to set before his distinguished guest; but Smeaton laughed lightly, laying his hand upon Van Noost's shoulder, and saying—

“ I should be little worthy of the name of a soldier, my good friend, if I could not appreciate the excellence of horse-flesh and dead cat in a besieged fortress, in

which light I suppose we may look upon your house, as you have taken the pains to lock the door. Whatever you can give me will be very acceptable; for, to say sooth, I had so much to do this morning that I have not broken my fast."

The meal, when it was set upon the table, however, belied Van Noost's disparaging excuses. It was not only abundant, but very savoury, although there was an hereditary smack of Dutch cookery in the dishes which might not have recommended them in general to English palates. Wine, Van Noost had none; but the beer was very good; and after dinner, the worthy entertainer produced from a cupboard in the corner a large black bottle, with a neck like a crane and a body like a goose, which he pressed upon his companion, assuring him that it was filled with genuine old Dutch Cinnamon, the like of which was not to be found in England. As the liquor was potent, however, and Smeaton thought he might as well keep his head cool, he de-

clined the spirit, and left Van Noost to enjoy it himself.

Looking out through the low window, after the meal was over, Smeaton cast his eyes up and down the road before the house, and then, turning to Van Noost, remarked—

“That man is no longer there; and I think I might as well take my departure.”

“Oh, he is hanging about somewhere near, depend upon it, my Lord,” replied Van Noost. “I beseech you not to hazard yourself in the street till after dark. They will track you home, to a certainty; and then the first thing that greets you tomorrow may be a warrant for the Tower.”

Smeaton seemed to entertain no great apprehension of such a result, remarking that with him there was no pretence for so violent a step.

“I would not willingly have them discover my abode, however,” he remarked, “for

they might hamper my movements. I think I shall return to France at once, Van Noost," he added, thoughtfully.

"Not surely before you have seen Lord Oxford?" said the other, with a look of surprise.

"Perhaps not," answered Smeaton; "but that can be done to-night. The letter I bear will gain me admission at any hour, without raising suspicion in him or any other person as to my real business."

"And even then, my good Lord," observed Van Noost, "if I might humbly be permitted to advise, you would still wait awhile—not in London, not in London, but in some quiet country place, where you would not be known, and yet could receive intelligence of all that passes, and be ready for any occasion. I am but a poor statuary, it is true, better acquainted with the arms of Apollo and the ankles of Venus than with the limbs of policy; but still I think it is better to be on the spot,

especially when there is no real danger. At all events, you would be able to judge more of the temper of the people and the chances of success."

"I have judged of the temper of the people already," replied Smeaton with a significant smile. "I mean of the people of London. I might, indeed, see something more of the country gentlemen, though I much doubt their wit if not their wishes, their discretion rather than their devotion. As to the population of this city, the mob that we saw, shouting 'Long live Oxford!' would in three months shout as gaily at his execution."

"Ay, ay," remarked Van Noost, "the people are always fickle, I know well. The time may come when even leaden statues may be out of fashion." And he sighed deeply at the very thought of such a catastrophe.

At that moment something seemed to catch Smeaton's eye, as he still stood near the window looking out into the road. His

face became eager ; his brow knitted ; his eyes flashed ; his lips curled ; and his nostrils expanded. The next instant, he threw up the sash, leaped out into the garden, crossed it at a run, (knocking down two leaden soldiers and a wood-nymph), vaulted over the rustic fence, and, exclaiming vehemently, “ How dare you strike that boy so cruelly, sir ? ” caught by the collar a man who had just knocked down, with a tremendous blow, a young lad in gentlemanly attire, who still lay upon the ground, as if stunned. Smeaton shook the man violently ; and the latter replied, in a sharp and insolent tone, struggling to get free :

“ Why did he switch my leg then, and dirt all my stockings ? ”

“ A mere accident,” answered Smeaton. “ He came up the road, swinging his cane about, and merely touched you by accident. Stand still ! You shall not go till I know who is your master. The boy is bleeding.”

"I shan't stand still," answered the man. "Take off your hand, or I'll serve you as I did him." At the same moment, he, in his turn, grasped Smeaton by the collar, and made an effort to trip him up.

His opponent, however, was younger, more active, and not a whit less strong, though his figure appeared a good deal slighter to the eye, from the symmetry with which it was formed. A struggle ensued ; but it lasted not a minute ; and at the end, the running footman—for such was Smeaton's opponent—was lying on his back in the dust.

The boy had by this time partly raised himself ; and, clapping his hands with childlike satisfaction, exclaimed :

"Well done, well done!"

A little crowd had now collected ; but Smeaton noticed nothing at the moment except his adversary ; and he once more demanded in a stern tone,

"Who is your master?"

The man was silent ; but one of the bystanders exclaimed :

“ He’s one of the Earl of Stair’s men.
Don’t you see his colours ?”

“ Ay, I am one of the Earl of Stair’s men,” growled the footman, rising ; “ and he will make you pay for what you have done. There are eyes upon you, master.”

“ He shall punish *you* or take the act upon himself,” answered Smeaton. At the same moment, Van Noost pulled his sleeve, whispering :

“ You had better come in, sir, you had better come in. This is a bad business.”

“ Come, young gentleman,” said Smeaton, laying his hand kindly on the boy’s arm, “ come in here with us, and let us see if he has hurt you much.”

The boy followed mechanically ; Van Noost locked the gate, which he had opened ; the footman went away grumbling, with two or three children running after him to look at him, keeping, however,

at a wary distance ; and the little crowd which had collected gradually dispersed.

Once in the house, Smeaton and Van Noost applied themselves to stop the bleeding of a wound of no great extent or consequence which the boy had received on his head in falling ; and the former asked him a number of questions, to which he received answers neither nonsensical nor without pertinence, but somewhat strange and uncommon. Shakspeare would probably have called them “ simple answers ;” for the meaning of that word simple was not so limited in his day as in ours ; yet there was an occasional touch of shrewdness in his replies, which savoured not at all of the simpleton. He used, it is true, expressions sometimes child-like, sometimes not altogether intelligible to those unaccustomed to his way of talking, but often poetical, or perhaps I should rather say figurative. His head he invariably called “ his noddle.” The ground on which he

had fallen, he spoke of as “mother earth.” The fist of the man who had struck him, he denominated “his poult,” and the blow “a dunder.” He bore the pain well, and seemed to care little for the accident ; but at the same time exhibited a degree of enthusiastic gratitude towards Smeaton (more than commensurate with the service which had been rendered) for interfering on his behalf, and especially for avenging him on the bully who had struck him.

“Ay, ay,” he said, looking eagerly in Smeaton’s face, “it was good to teach the coulter-head that he’s not too long to lie on mother earth.”

In a few minutes, he seemed quite recovered ; and Van Noost poured him out a little of his Dutch cinnamon, which, though Smeaton rather disapproved of the remedy, had a marvellous effect in restoring the boy’s spirits.

Nevertheless he appeared somewhat eager to be gone ; and his companions were not particularly disposed to detain him when

they found that he was not seriously injured. Van Noost saw him to the garden-gate, and, on his return, perceived that his companion had fallen into a fit of thought, in which he continued for a moment or two after his host entered.

"I have made up my mind, Van Noost," said Smeaton, at length. "There are circumstances in which it is as well to take the bull by the horns. It is evident that your good friend, the Earl of Stair, has recognised me. Although we never interchanged a word in our lives, he has seen me more than once. I will not play at hide-and-seek with him. I will go to him tonight and demand that this man shall be discharged for the outrage he has committed."

Van Noost looked astonished—nay, aghast. "But, my dear lord," he exclaimed, "think, for Heaven's sake, of what you are doing. Were it to take a city or to save an empire, it might be worth while to get into the inside of a wooden horse

and be wheeled into the lion's den, like the Greek gentlemen in days of old ; but, to punish a running footman, I cannot say that the object is worthy of the risk. Be-think you of your policy, noble lord."

" It is the most politic course, Van Noost," replied Smeaton. " I have nothing to fear but a little inconvenience consequent upon discovery. The discovery being already made, all the danger that can be incurred is incurred already. A part of it may be obviated by boldness. But see, who that is ringing at your bell."

Van Noost instantly ran to the window and looked towards the little gate, a large bell, hanging at its side, having been just rung violently.

" It is the boy again," he said, " and a gentleman with two servants. What shall I do ?"

" Oh, let them in, let them in," cried Smeaton, in a gay and indifferent tone. " Now that I have resolved to throw off disguise, I may as well hold a levee."

Not without very apparent unwillingness, the worthy statuary called one of his workmen, and bade him open the garden-gate and give admission to the strangers. He did not perform the office himself ; for he would be seized with sudden fits of self-importance when he thought it necessary to keep up his dignity. The boy and the gentleman who accompanied him were speedily admitted to the garden ; and, leaving the two servants at the gate, walked on to the house, and were introduced unannounced into Van Noost's little parlour.

"That is he, that is he," cried the boy, pointing to Smeaton, who had remained seated till they entered ; and the gentleman by whom the lad was accompanied, a well-dressed, middle-aged man, advanced, holding out his hand, and saying—"I have to thank you, sir, for your generous intercession on behalf of my son."

Taking his offered hand, Smeaton replied with a smile,

"I am sorry that it was not called into activity sooner, or I might have spared him a very heavy blow ; but I had not the slightest idea that a great, powerful man like that, would think of striking a young gentleman of your son's age, for an offence which was, evidently, merely accidental."

"It is too much the habit with our great men, sir," observed the other, "to keep bullies and bruisers in their service. But the Earl of Stair shall hear of this, and learn that, though we are under a foreign king, his creatures must be a little more considerate of the feelings and rights of Englishmen."

"I know nothing of Lord Stair except by report," said Smeaton ; "but, from all I have heard, I should not suppose he was one to countenance such outrageous conduct in his servants ; and I shall, certainly, request him to dismiss this man on account of his insolence to myself."

"I shall insist upon it," replied the other.

“ Although he may never have heard the name of Sir John Newark, yet my possessions and my station in the country will not permit of my being insulted in the person of my son with impunity.”

Smeaton smiled slightly as he rejoined—

“ I shall hold out no threat, Sir John ; but, dealing with Lord Stair as one gentleman with another, shall make it my request that he dismisses that man, as one who disgraces his service. I do not think he will refuse ; but, of course, in your own case, you will act as you think fit. Now, to speak of pleasanter subjects,” he continued, holding out his hand to the boy ; “ I did not know, my young friend, when I interfered in your behalf, that I was serving the son of a gentleman to whom I bear a letter from one of his intimate friends.”

The boy caught his hand, and shook it eagerly, exclaiming—

“ I’m glad of that—I’m glad of that :

I was sure my father would like you. You gave the coulter-head a fine fall. I heard all his bones crack and rattle as he tumbled. I should have liked to give him a kick ; but that would not have been fair when he was down, you know."

" May I ask, then, to whom I have the pleasure of speaking ?" inquired Sir John Newark, who had been eyeing his companion with some curiosity.

" I am called Colonel Henry Smeaton," replied that gentleman ; " though my military rank, I suppose, will not be acknowledged in this country, as it has been gained in the service of the House of Austria."

Sir John Newark shook him heartily by the hand, with the air and warmth of an old friend.

" I am most happy to see you, Colonel Smeaton," he said. " I have already received a letter, giving me information that you would probably come to see me at my poor house." Then, dropping his voice to a

whisper, he added, "from Lord Bolingbroke."

"The letter I bear is from the Duke of Ormond," said Smeaton, in a colder tone, the name of Bolingbroke appearing to have no great charms for him. "Will you say where I shall have the honour of delivering it, for at this moment it is not about me?"

"No where, I trust, but at my poor manor-house at Ale," replied Sir John. "It is a pleasure that I have promised myself; and I was even now on the eve of hastening back thither for the purpose of meeting you on your arrival. My son was walking from his school to meet me, in order to go down with me to-morrow, when he was assaulted. But I think you told me, my dear Richard," he continued, "that this other gentleman had been very kind to you also."

And he looked towards Van Noost, who had been standing near the window while the conversation took place.

"O yes," answered the boy. "He gave me some nice stuff, and cockered me up famously ; but it was the other that made the big bully take measure of the paving-stones."

"Will you not be seated, Sir John," said Van Noost, putting a chair for the knight, "and allow me to give you a glass of the nice stuff, as your son calls it, which did so much good ?"

"Well, I don't know what its name is," retorted the boy ; "but I know it tasted like drinking gingerbread—hot and sweet—and a very nice taste besides."

"Dutch Cinnamon, I'll warrant," said Sir John Newark, laughing, and seating himself. "We are not very much accustomed to such things in my house. So he might well not know what it was. I have almost forgotten the taste of it ; but I know it is very good ; and I do not at all object, sir, to try your store."

Now, be it known to the reader, that, at that period of history, the greater part

of the English nation had become afflicted with a disease from which they are not altogether free even yet, although a great physician has lately been amongst them, undertaking its especial cure. The disease I mean is, dram-drinking, which, for some time, affected not only the lower but many of the higher classes. So that there was nothing at all extraordinary in Sir John Newark consenting to drink a glass of very strong spirit even before he had dined. But that worthy gentleman was not without his own particular motives in anything he did, and frequently covered, or attempted to cover, them by an air of frank and straightforward affability. At present, indeed, he seemed to have no thought but of Van Noost's good liquor, watching him as he brought from the corner-cupboard both the long-necked bottle I have before mentioned, and an exceedingly thin wine-glass, with a tall stalk lightly cut and gilt.

"It pours out like cream," observed Sir

John, as his host held the neck of the bottle over the glass.

"Ay, this is none of your poisonous drugs such as they sell at the chandlers' shops and the barbers', made out of the lees of old wine, or damaged sugar," replied Van Noost, still pouring; "none of your aqua mirabilis, or aqua salis, or plague-water, or colic-water, but genuine Dutch cinnamon, imported by my good father in his own sea-stock. Take it, Sir John. It will do your heart good."

Sir John drank, and praised, and drank again; and then, turning to Smeaton, who was speaking with his son, he said—

"You are hard drinkers on the Continent, I believe, Colonel Smeaton, and would beat us Englishmen at a match any day."

"Not in the countries where I have principally resided," returned Smeaton. "I mean Spain, and some of the Austrian States. I have heard, indeed, of certain

fearful orgies amongst the French officers in Spain; but I know little of France or Frenchmen, having merely passed through the country once or twice, and that very rapidly."

"Did you ever chance in your travels to meet with a gentleman named Somerville —Richard Somerville ?" asked Sir John Newark, in a careless tone.

Smeaton shook his head, replying—

"No, I never did. In what country is he residing ?"

"I really can hardly tell," returned Sir John Newark ; "for, though he is a distant relation of mine, we have not held much communication together for many years. France or Lorraine, I believe, was the last country in which he was heard of."

"I think I do remember," remarked Smeaton, in a musing tone, "having heard the name mentioned at Nancy. But they said he had gone to seek his fortunes amongst the Spaniards in the New World.

—Somerville—yes, that was the name surely.”

“Ay, very probable,” said Sir John Newark. “I think a rumour of his intention reached me. You never were in those golden countries yourself, were you ?”

“Never,” replied Smeaton. “The journey is somewhat far ; and, as I am well contented with what I have, I feel no inclination to banish myself from civilization in pursuit of wealth.”

“I should like to see the country where gold grows,” observed Sir John Newark’s son, looking earnestly at Smeaton. “If I were a lord in golden land, I would give you a whole tree.”

“Thank you, my dear lad,” said Smeaton, laughing. “I fear, however, I should have some difficulty in eating the fruit of that tree.”

“Why, golden pippins—they would be golden pippins !” cried the boy, clapping his hands at the thought. “I wish I had some now ; but they are not ripe yet.”

The conversation then took another turn. Sir John Newark became actually gay and jocular, pressed upon Smeaton his invitation to his house at Ale, and did not depart till he had obtained from him a conditional promise to go down and spend a fortnight with him, if he determined to remain any time in England. He shook his new friend by the hand, at parting, with considerable warmth ; but there was a degree of hearty cordiality in the boy's grasp of Smeaton's hand, which pleased him better.

" You must and shall come down," said the boy, in a whisper ; " and I'll show you all the coves and the paths among the rocks and over the cliffs, where nobody ever perches but I, and the sea-mews, and the fishing-hawks. Old Jones Skinner, the smuggler, broke his neck there ; and people are afraid ever since ; but you are not afraid of anything, I am sure."

" I trust not," answered Smeaton ; and thus they parted.

When they were gone, Van Noost, who had been, for him, remarkably silent and reserved, broke forth, upon the character of Sir John Newark.

“Take care what you do with him, my Lord,” he said. “He is not much to be trusted ; and, for Heaven’s sake, do not let him know your real name. First he has been one thing, then he has been another, just as he thought it served his own interest. He was once very great with Sunderland, in the old King’s reign, and with the Duke of Shrewsbury too. Then he paid court to the Duke of Marlborough ; and then he was one of Bolingbroke’s men. I don’t know whether he is a good enemy or not ; but I am certain he is not a good friend. He is shrewd, mighty shrewd too, and has contrived to amass great wealth, and gain large estates, by not the fairest means, they say.”

“I will be careful, Van Noost,” replied Smeaton, quietly ; “but yet I think I

shall go. Much, however, will depend upon my interview with Lord Stair. He has recognized me, I am sure—nothing escapes his keen eyes—and I will soon see whether that recognition is likely to prove dangerous. If so, I will stay and confront the danger here. If not, I will go down to this Ale Manor for a time, and watch quietly the course of events."

Van Noost shrugged his shoulders, and shook his head, saying,

" Well, my good Lord, well. You must have your own way, and put your head into the lion's mouth, if you think fit ; but it is an unpleasant place to rest one's nod-dle in ; and were I you, I certainly would not try it."

Smeaton laughed, replying,

" I do not think the beast is dangerous ; but we shall see. And now, my good friend, I think I shall set out ; for the shades of evening are beginning to fall."

" Not yet, my Lord, not yet," cried

Van Noost, who was evidently much alarmed at his companion's determination. "It is but a cloud come over the sky ; and I would fain have you take a little more time to consider. It is well enough for me to brave Lord Stair, and talk as impudently to him as if I were his equal ; first, because he can show nothing against me, except that I love one King better than another, and secondly, because I am too powerless and humble to be dangerous : the man who will fight a boar, or a wolf, or even a lion, (saving your presence,) will often turn aside not to tread on a beetle or a worm ; but with your Lordship, the case might be very different. You would make a fine cast of the net ; and they seem fond of taking great fish just now."

"And very wise they are too," answered Smeaton, with a smile. "A large fish is always better than a small one."

"Wrong, wrong, my dear Lord," exclaimed Van Noost. "Smelts for my money ;

only they are so dear—a shilling a score—that I can't afford them."

" But my good friend," replied Smeaton, " you are much mistaken as to my objects and my position, though I strove hard to explain to you what they really are."

" Ah, some of my lead gets into my pate," said Van Noost, with a sigh; " and when an idea is fixed there, it is as stiff as a river-god in a fountain, and requires to be melted and re-cast, before it will take another shape. But your Lordship was going to say—"

" Merely, my good friend," rejoined Smeaton, more gravely, " that I do not come over here to stir up any rebellion in the land, but simply, at the request of a very dear friend, to ascertain what are the real feelings of the country, and especially of the leading men therein. I have no dangerous papers about me ; for I refused to be the bearer of any such. As yet I have

communicated with no one but yourself, my object being simply to see with my own eyes, hear with my own ears, and communicate to some who are dear to me the result of my observations. Thus, although avowedly, as all my family have been, a friend of my legitimate Prince, I have given no excuse for treating me as a rebel to existing authority. The faction that now rules the land can take hold of no word or act of mine. My father, it is true, was banished and proclaimed ; but such is not the case with me ; and I have a right to walk my native country at liberty."

Van Noost was evidently not convinced ; and he contrived to detain his companion with arguments till the sun had actually set. Then, however, Smeaton rose, saying :

" Now, Van Noost, I must really go ; but I shall see you to-morrow early, and we will talk farther."

"I will open the back door," said Van Noost, somewhat ruefully, "and let your Lordship out through the garden into the fields. The first turning on the right will take you straight up to the Dog and Duck ; and then you cannot miss your way."

"No, no, Van Noost," replied Smeaton. "The open way and the straight, if you please, my good friend ; unless you are afraid to have me seen coming out of your house. I am tired of these maskings."

"Heaven forbid that I should be afraid, noble Lord," cried Van Noost eagerly. "I would walk with your lordship to the Council Office itself, if you liked ; and, indeed, I think I had better go part of the way with you."

Smeaton, however, declined all company ; and the door of the house and gate of the garden having been opened, he issued forth into Piccadilly, and took his way back towards St. James's street.

Van Noost looked after him for a mo-

ment or two, shook his head gravely, and then, once more locking the garden-gate, set to work in the twilight to put the leaden figures, which Smeaton had knocked down, upon their legs again.

CHAPTER IV.

It is curious, what mighty business is transacted in mean places. The destinies of the world, and the widest-spread enlightenment of the human mind, have gone forth from two of the smallest, dirtiest, and most pitiful streets in London, Downing Street and Paternoster Row. John Dalrymple, Earl of Stair, one of the most remarkable men of the age in which he lived, and afterwards celebrated for the extraordinary splendour both of his equipage and

his table when ambassador at the court of France, was at this time dwelling in a small hired house in Golden Square. Nevertheless, he had been already marked out for high employments, by the clear-sighted eyes of the Whig ministry of that day ; and it was without difficulty, though not until after two enquiries, that Smeaton discovered the house in which he lived. He paused before the door, and looked up in doubt ; for the name of the Earl of Stair was so frequently in men's mouths, and his liveries were so well known in the neighbourhood, that the young traveller had expected to find a magnificent mansion, fitted to contain a numerous train of servants.

But let us pass over his surprise and his inquiries, and enter the room of the noble Earl at the moment when Smeaton approached his dwelling. He was seated in a large, straight-backed arm-chair, with a round, carved oak table on his left hand, having a thick, solitary candle close to his elbow, shaded by a fan-shaped piece of green

silk fixed in the candlestick. Thus, that keen, penetrating, but noble countenance, was completely in shadow, while the bright light streamed upon a large packet of old papers on the table, and upon one which he held in his hand. Better known to the English historian as a diplomatist and statesman of consummate sagacity than as a general, it may excite some surprise when I state that the paper which he was examining, with a pleasant smile upon his face, contained a rough plan of the battle of Oudenard, with a number of remarks, minute dates, and numbers, written underneath in his own hand. He had drawn it up while hurrying over to England with despatches announcing that great victory, in obtaining which he had borne a considerable share, that he might be ready with all the details in case of being questioned by the ministry. It had been of no service to him at the time ; but now the sight of it occasioned pleasant sensations—the memory of triumph and success,

the recollection. Perhaps, of young, bright hopes and great aspirations—at all events the thoughts and feelings of earlier and happier years. A refreshing breeze is ever blowing from the fields of youth ; and, when we read any record of those former days, we do but open a window to let it in. Melancholy may be mingled with it, and it may bring upon its wings the tolling of the church-bell for all that have departed ; but still it is sweet and fresh, and beneficial to the health of the heart.

He laid down that paper and took up another, examined it for a moment and put it aside. In doing so, he touched the pile of old letters ; they fell over ; and he laid his hand upon another document at random. The instant he looked at it, however, he laid it gently on the table, with a sort of shudder, and fell into deep thought.

While he thus remained, an old, staid serving man opened the door and entered

the room, without the Earl perceiving him.

"There's a gentleman below, my Lord," said the man, with a strong Scottish accent.

The Earl took no notice, but remained exactly in the same position, with his eyes fixed on the floor.

"I beg your Lordship's pardon," said the servant, "but there's a gentleman below seeking to see you, and will indeed take no denial."

Lord Stair started from his reverie, and told the man to repeat what he had said ; which he did, with the addition of the words, "He bade me give this card to your Lordship."

The Earl took it, and looked at the name before he answered : then a slight, very slight look of surprise came upon his face ; but, bowing his head quietly, he said,

"Put a seat there opposite to me, and show him up."

The man did as he was commanded ; and, in a minute after, Smeaton entered the room. Lord Stair rose, bowed, and pointed to the chair opposite, saying,

“ Pray be seated, Colonel Smeaton.”

His visitor placed himself in the chair in an attitude of easy grace, with his sword drawn up by his side, and the hilt resting on his knee. The old servant departed ; and the door closed.

“ I have intruded upon you, my Lord,” said Smeaton, at once, “ to speak upon a somewhat unpleasant subject. I will therefore beg your patience for a moment till I have mentioned all the circumstances.”

Lord Stair listened in silence, merely bowing his head ; and Smeaton went on to detail the violent conduct of the Earl’s running footman towards young Richard Newark, and his after insolence towards himself, assuring him that he had witnessed the whole transaction from the beginning, and that the lad had given no

offence but by accidentally touching the man's leg in swinging about his cane as he walked along.

Still Lord Stair listened in profound silence, interrupting the detail neither by comment nor question. When Smeaton had completely done, however, and paused as if for a reply, he inquired, in a somewhat dry tone—

“What is it you wish me to do in this case, Colonel Smeaton?”

“I have trusted, my Lord, from your character,” replied Smeaton, “that a simple statement of the facts would be sufficient to guide you as to what was requisite. But, as you inquire what I could wish you to do, I must reply—to dismiss the man from your service.”

“He is a useful fellow,” said Lord Stair, with a slight smile. “Pray, what is the alternative, Colonel Smeaton?”

“Nay, my good Lord,” replied Smeaton, smiling in return, “I am not quite so pugnacious a person as to come ready

armed with a hard alternative. I trust and doubt not that your Lordship will do that which is right, without considering any alternative at all."

"Very well," said Lord Stair, more frankly. "I will consider of it for a few minutes. But now let us speak of more important things than appertain to the fate of a footman. You seem surprised ; but I mean the fate of a young nobleman, who has, I fear, placed himself in a dangerous situation."

Smeaton paused for a moment; for there was a kindness of tone as well as of look and manner, in Lord Stair, as he introduced the expected subject, which he had not been prepared for. After very short consideration, however, he answered ingenuously,

"If your Lordship alludes to myself, I do not imagine that my situation is dangerous at all."

"Then, why appear in England under a feigned name ?" demanded the Earl.

"There may be many sufficient causes, my noble Lord," replied Smeaton, "without apprehension having any share in the motives. I may be poor and proud, as is generally said of your ancestors and mine; and, to say truth, poverty was one of the causes of my determination not to assume any rank in this country. An unknown stranger, without any pretensions to dignity, can act as he likes; but it would not do for an English nobleman to take up his abode in a little lodging up two pair of stairs."

"In Gerard Street, Soho," added the Earl with a smile. "It is a very good street, notwithstanding. Great men have lived there before now." He paused for an instant in thought, as if considering how he should proceed, and then said, somewhat abruptly—"Are you aware that your father and myself were once intimate friends, and that, although unfortunately differing in our political views, nothing has ever occurred to diminish my regard for

him, or, that I know of, his regard for me?"

"I have always heard my late father speak of your Lordship with great respect and esteem," replied Smeaton; "but he never mentioned any intimacy. Indeed, I was not aware that you were personally acquainted."

"Oh yes," replied Lord Stair, in a very marked and peculiar tone of voice. "We were very intimate in the darker days of my life. There are circumstances, my lord, circumstances of deep pain and grief, which occasionally bind men together by stronger ties than any which can be formed amidst joys and pleasures.—But I see you do not know my history."

He paused, and fell into a gloomy reverie, which Smeaton suffered him to follow, uninterrupted, for a few minutes; and then, perhaps in order to draw his mind away from thoughts which seemed very painful, the young Colonel recurred to a previous topic, saying—"I can assure your lordship

most sincerely that I myself know no danger which I run in coming to England, or even in presenting myself at the house of Lord Stair. I mean that I am not the bearer of any letters, papers, or messages, which can fairly give umbrage to the existing government."

Lord Stair roused himself from his reverie, and replied in an altered tone—

"Letters, papers, and messages may all be absent ; and yet your intentions and your acts might place you in a dangerous position. I seek not, my lord, to pry into your secrets, if you have any ; but I only wish to warn you, for your own good, that England is, at this present moment, a very perilous place for persons entertaining the views which your family have always entertained, and which, doubtless, you yourself entertain. Let me explain myself in what respects I think it perilous. Not alone are the eyes of government keenly fixed upon every suspected person : not alone are ministers prepared at all points to put down

any attempt at insurrection : not alone are they ready to take the responsibility upon themselves of adopting measures, somewhat beyond the law, to meet circumstances not contemplated by the law—though all this might render your circumstances perilous enough ; but there are other persons and other designs which may be more dangerous to you. I speak of those blind and infatuated men who entertain vain hopes of being able to overthrow the established government of the country, and alter, by force, the succession to the crown as settled by Act of Parliament."

He had spoken calmly, but somewhat sternly. He now again resumed a milder tone, and went on to say—" These men, deceiving themselves, are ever ready to deceive others ; nay, more, are endeavouring, by every sort of artifice, by specious arguments, by false representations, by cunningly devised displays of an unreal power, and by manœuvres too numerous to detail, to lead the unwary or the ill-informed into a

belief that schemes, perfectly impracticable, are certain of success. I warn you, my dear lord, of these things, as an old friend of your father ; and, to say the truth, nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to hear to-morrow that you had embarked for the continent."

"That, I fear, is impossible," replied Smeaton ; "for I have business to transact which must detain me some little time—business," he added, seeing a peculiar expression come over Lord Stair's face, "totally unconnected with politics or party."

"I think you would not say so with any reservation," replied the Earl, and then fell into a fit of musing, which his companion did not interrupt. "I wish," he continued, in a kindly tone, after he had brought his ruminations to an end, "I wish you would allow me to deal with you as a friend, and ask you a few questions, in that character, which might be impertinent in a stranger."

"Pray do, my lord," replied Smeaton.

“ Anything concerning myself alone, I will not refuse to answer ; but I must beg you not to touch upon the business to which I have alluded, which I have undertaken for a friend, but which is, I give you my honour, merely of a private and domestic nature.”

“ I shall not meddle with it,” replied Lord Stair ; “ and my questions shall be very simple ones. How long do you intend to remain ?”

“ Probably not more than three months,” replied Smeaton.

“ Somewhat long,” said the Earl, thoughtfully. “ However, if it must be so, we cannot help it. Do you intend to pass that time in London ?”

“ Certainly not,” replied Smeaton. “ I shall probably leave London in two or three days, having accepted an invitation to visit Sir John Newark, at Ale Manor, in ——shire.”

“ With a letter from Bolingbroke,” said

Lord Stair, drily. "We have heard of that."

"For once, you have been misinformed," replied Smeaton, smiling slightly. "I have no letter from Bolingbroke, and am barely personally known to him. It seems he did me the honour of writing to Sir John Newark; but I cannot be responsible for anything he may have thought fit to say in that letter. The only introduction I bear to Sir John is a friendly letter from the Duke of Ormond, who gave it to me, knowing that I had inquiries to make in that part of the country, and thinking that it might be of service to me; but it has no reference to politics, direct or indirect."

"It is in the hands of government," said Lord Stair, in a quiet tone, "but it will be restored to you. You seem surprised; but your arrival at Dover was known three days ago, and created some suspicion. Your assumption of another name, and your conferences with Van-

Noost—poor foolish fellow—increased those suspicions ; and, when I saw you with that person in the street, I sent a man after you to see where you went, in order that I might have some conversation with you, and save you from pain and annoyance, if not from difficulty. You staid so long, however, with the leaden-figure man, that measures have been taken by other parties in regard to you, which I could have wished avoided."

" Do you mean as affecting my personal liberty ?" demanded Smeaton.

" No, not that," replied Lord Stair, " but examinations have been made at your lodging. Do you know much of this Sir John Newark ?"

" Little or nothing," replied Smeaton. " I near he is a waverer in politics ; and that is all I know."

The Earl mused again.

" I believe," he said, after a short interval of thought, " that the house of Sir John Newark is as safe a place as any for

a gentleman in your position. He is one of those who, to use a vulgar term, do not readily quarrel with their bread and butter. He is more bold in words than in deeds, it is true ; but he is not much suspected by government, as there are so many holds upon him. He may always be bound by self-interest. He may always be restrained by fear. I do not mean cowardice—for, personally, he is brave enough ; but fear of losing an acre of land or a hundred guineas, would make him swear allegiance to the devil or the Grand Turk. It is as safe a place for you as any that I know ; but still, be on your guard against temptation ; for a great number of unruly spirits are in the West, who will, before long, bring a heavy hand upon their own heads, if I am not mistaken. I had fancied, indeed, that you were going northward ; and that might have been more dangerous."

"I have but little temptation to go to the north, my good lord," replied the

younger gentleman. "It would be a painful sight to see my family estates in the hands of others, and our once splendid property enriching those, whom even your lordship will permit me to call traitors."

"I will not find fault with your doing so," replied Lord Stair, with a smile; "for your father was certainly much wronged by near and dear friends, as they professed themselves. If I remember rightly," he continued, "your mother had lands in the West. Supposing they were not confiscated, I can conceive the motives of your journey."

"They were forgotten in the general sweep," replied Smeaton; "and, happily, we had faithful and honest tenants, who would not take advantage of their lord's calamities. They are all that is left us. But I will not, even in so small a point, deceive your lordship," he continued, abruptly, "nor willingly suffer you to deceive yourself. I am not going to the West to visit that small estate, and probably may never

set my foot on it. I go simply to transact some business for a friend."

"Is he a *royal* one?" asked Lord Stair, with a keen look.

"No," answered Smeaton, laughing, "nor now at all connected with royalty. My friend is a merchant; but one," he added, gaily, "who does not traffic in any contraband commodities—not even in the delicate lace of treason. I have assured your lordship that this has nothing to do with any matters of state or policy whatever. I have to thank you for many acts of kindness to-night. I must beg you to add one more—to believe me."

"I do, I do," exclaimed the Earl, warmly. "One, accustomed to deal largely with men, judges them fully as much by the countenance as by the words. I remember well when your father and I were studying together, in deep seclusion, with a good minister in Ayrshire, and were told to read the historian Thucydides, we could make nothing of him, though we

knew a little of Greek, till your father got from Edinburgh a copy of the work with copious notes in Latin at the bottom of the page. In a moment, it became all clear ; and we found how often we had been mistaken in our supposed interpretations. Thus one foreign language served to elucidate another ; and I have often since had occasion to think that the expressions of a man's face are the notes which the grand commentator, Nature, has given us for the right understanding of his words. I do believe you, sincerely, and think I can insure that you shall not be molested during the three months you propose to stay, provided you pledge yourself to avoid all meddling with the politics of the country."

"I thank your lordship heartily," replied Smeaton, "and fully accept the terms." Then, changing the subject suddenly, he added, "I was not aware that your lordship had studied with my father. He,

being a second son, was intended, at first, to be educated for the bar."

"I also was a second son," said Lord Stair, in a low voice, with the expression of his face changing to a look of the deepest melancholy, "*I* was a second son—but not then—not then. This fatal hand had by that time done the deed."

The surprise which Smeaton felt at the sudden change in manner, tone, and look, and at, the strange words of Lord Stair, could not be prevented from appearing on his countenance ; and the Earl, whose eyes were fixed upon him, said, " You do not know the story. It is a sad one ; but I often force myself to tell it ; and there is something strange in your coming here to-night. The moment before you entered, I had the letter now before me in my hand—the letter of recall out of a long and unjust banishment from the bosom of my family. To your father's kindness and support during those long dark years, I owe much ; and

I may as well tell you how it all happened."

Smeaton replied in a few common-place words of interest, for there are times when nothing is appropriate but a common-place. The Earl heard him not, however, but kept gazing into vacancy, with a contracted brow and somewhat haggard eye.

"I have it all before me even now," he said, at length, in a low and tremulous tone, "that dark and horrible scene, and its terrible consequences. There are some things which brand themselves upon the mind even of childhood with marks never to be effaced; and, though long years and busy scenes, passions, desires, hopes, joys, acts, feelings, have thronged so thickly into the intervening space that one would think they raised up a cloud between the present and the past which no eye could penetrate—yet there it is, that one terrible hour, as vivid and distinct as

when it burst upon me like a blaze of lightning. This hand, young man, took my elder brother's life—not willingly, mark me—not with forethought, nor under the rash impulse of any sudden passion. We were boys together, and loved each other well. I envied him not his elder birth, God knows : I hardly even knew or felt its advantages. It was all in sport : I knew not that the gun was charged. He had presented it at me himself the moment before. God only knows how it was that I was not the victim, and that *he* was not left to mourn *me*. Think then of my horror when the musquетoon went off, and my brother fell at my feet a bleeding corpse ! That was the first sickening taste of the bitterness with which my cup was to be filled ; but, when, instead of comfort in my agony, and support under the dreadful weight cast upon me, I found the awful misfortune imputed to me as a crime, when, in spite of its being

shown and proved, by those who witnessed it, that all were accidental, and my horror and grief was apparent to all eyes, I was cast out from the bosom of my family like an exile, banished to a distance, and treated like a criminal who has only escaped condign punishment by some quirk of law, and who lives with the shame and the reproach, and the stigma clinging, to him for ever—to describe my sensations then, is impossible. At first, it was all a chaos of sorrow ; but gradually the sense of injustice raised up a spirit of resistance, hard, dogged, malevolent, but still serviceable, for it enabled me to bear up. And then, for my blessing and my safety, I found two friends, who gave a better direction to my thoughts—who raised up hope again in my bosom, and softened even the memory of the past. The first was the minister under whose tuition I was placed : a wise and good man, who moved, in his humble sphere, untainted

by the vices or the follies of the day. The other was your noble father : a lad some years older than myself, who was pursuing his studies under the same tutor. Oh, how sweetly those days come back memory, when first my heart opened to his kindness, and when, loaded with anguish, such as is rarely known but in manhood, I told him all my thoughts, and wept upon his bosom like a child ! How sweetly, too, come back his counsels and exhortations ! how gently, how kindly he soothed my angry feelings ! how wisely, he taught me to rely on higher and nobler principles for support under my affliction than the mere stern sense of being wronged ! how he soothed my irritation, and won me away from my sorrows ! My young friend, it is not to be forgotten ; and if there was bitterness in the cup pressed hard to my boyish lips, there was sweetness to be remembered too. 'Tis well nigh thirty years ago, I think—per-

haps more, for your father married very early —and I have never seen him since ; but I forget not one lineament of his face, one tone of his voice, one expression of his countenance ; and you are very like him.”

As he spoke, the Earl extended his hand to Smeaton, and then added,

“ You now can see the causes of the interest I take in your fate. That interest will never diminish, and will always be active in your favour, whenever my duty to the land of my birth and the sovereign whom I serve, will give it scope. I am obliged to make this reservation ; for it is a rule that I have always acted upon, to suffer no personal feeling whatever to interfere with my actions as a public man. But I trust to your own good sense, to your own good feeling, to preserve you from any position in which your interests would be opposed to my duties.”

Smeaton replied not to the Earl’s last words, but inquired, in a tone of real feeling,

" How did this sad story end ?"

" Perhaps to my advantage," replied Lord Stair. " I recovered my calmness and composure of mind : never my light gaiety of heart. My own conscience acquitted me of any fault but boyish indiscretion ; though the memory of having taken a brother's life remained as a dark cloud shading the too fervid heat of youth. I applied myself to intense study. I learned to think when others are dreaming. I sought abstraction from myself in the study of other men. I acquired in boyhood the mind of a man. The stream might be small, indeed, for it was not yet flooded by experience ; but it was diverted from its natural channel by the rocks and precipices which surrounded it. At length, representations from my good tutor of the forced progress I had made, his overpraise of my character, disposition, and abilities, and his mild, Christian expostulations against the injustice that was shown me, had their effect ; and, at the end of

several years, I was called back to my family. I returned with a feeling of dread and anxiety, which was not without cause ; for, though I was nominally forgiven, I could see in all faces, I could hear in all tones, that what I had done was not forgotten—that a chilling memory existed of that dark accident, which extinguished all warm affection towards me. An opportunity of escape from such an icy dwelling soon presented itself ; and I gladly seized it, by entering the army. Life was of little value to me—less so than to most of my companions ; my previous studies gave me some advantages over them ; and I became what I now am, succeeding to my father's honours and estates, on his sudden and somewhat mysterious death years ago. Wealth, power, and some share of fame, have all been mine ; but I can tell you, my Lord, that I would sacrifice them all, fall back into obscurity, or even poverty, and pursue

a humble course of laborious and unknown exertion, in any drudging profession, without a murmur, could I but blot out the past, could I but find some breeze to waft away the one dark cloud that hangs upon memory, could I but wash from my hand the stain of a brother's blood, however innocently shed."

As he spoke, Lord Stair covered his eyes with his hands ; and then came a long, silent pause. Smeaton knew not how to break it, except by rising to depart ; but the movement instantly called the Earl's attention.

" Do not go," he said, " do not go. You must stay and sup with me. We have other things to think of. I should wish to do something that would be of service to you, or might be useful, in case of need ; for my mind foreshadows troublous times coming. But I must think of what can be effected."

" I thank you most sincerely, my dear Lord," replied Smeaton, " but assure you

as sincerely that I do not propose to meddle with troublous times, nor take part in troublous scenes."

"Propose!" echoed the Earl, with a faint smile. "How many things affect the whole course of our existence, in ways which we never proposed to our minds! Circumstances make man, more often than man makes circumstances. Let no one answer for his actions, even of to-morrow; for we may fearlessly affirm that he knows not what they will be. It is well to be prepared for all."

He rose, and rang the bell, saying, when the servant appeared,

"Supper at the usual hour. This gentleman sups with me."

Then, resuming the conversation, he led it in a different course, talking of many general subjects, and gradually regaining his ordinary tone and manner.

"And now, my young friend," he said, at length, "to return to the object of your

coming : what of this business between my running footman, Thomas Hardy, and young Newark, thrifty Sir John Newark's son ?”

“ I do sincerely hope that your Lordship will dismiss him,” replied Smeaton, in an earnest tone, “ not to satisfy or gratify me—no, nor even to punish the ruffianly fellow himself, but for the repute and honour of my noble friend, the Earl of Stair. If your Lordship had but heard the comments of the crowd upon the insolence of noblemen's servants, and especially of this man, who was recognized as yours, you would see that this is no specious motive put forth to cover personal anger. I punished the fellow on the spot for what he did to me ; but the crowd handled your Lordship's name rather roughly, on the provocation given by him.”

“ I could swallow that easily,” replied Lord Stair, with a somewhat haughty curl of the lip ; “ but he is, as you have said, a ruffianly fellow. He has broad shoulders,

though, and stout limbs, makes his way well through a crowd, and has no more fear than decency. Nevertheless, you have justice on your side. I need hardly say he told his own story before you came but I detected its falsehood, even in his own showing, reproved him for what he had done, and informed him I should wait till I heard farther before I decided on my conduct. He has had much practice in lying, but does not do it dexterously. He shall be dismissed. Let us say no more on the subject. Look upon it as done ; and now, here is supper announced. We will forget all unpleasant things ; and I will endeavour to have one peaceful evening before I set out. You have heard, of course, that I am going to take the chief command in Scotland, till Argyle can be made available. Then, I suppose, my destination will be France."

Thus saying, he led the way to a room on the ground floor, where supper was pre-

pared ; and Smeaton's evening was passed in a very different manner from that which he had anticipated in the morning. The topics on which they had touched recurred no more. General subjects were alone spoken of ; and the only allusion to the fate or fortunes of either, was made by Lord Stair, when he promised to send his guest, on the following day, a letter for a gentleman in the West, who might be serviceable to him in case of need.

" You can present it or not, as you think fit," said the Earl ; " but, at all events, it will shew that I look upon you as my friend, which, I believe I am not too bold in supposing, may prove a protection for you against annoyance and suspicion, in case of any troubles arising in the land."

Smeaton thanked him heartily ; and thus they parted.

The Colonel remained for three days

more in London ; but I will not here dwell upon his farther proceedings in the great city, before I may have to speak of them hereafter as fully as their little importance deserves.

CHAPTER V.

It was a bright and cheerful morning ; and the scenery round Ale would have been in its greatest beauty, had but one cloud floated in the sky to chequer the landscape with moving light and shadow. But there was not the slightest stain upon the heaven ; and the sun, in his hot noon, was shining over the flat, waveless sea, and over the brown, high-topped hills and deep dells round about. The trees were in their rich foliage, green and full :

no speck of road side dust—no particle of soot—smurched the pure leaves ; and underneath their branches might be found cool shade, and pure, refreshing air, breathing lightly from the sea.

There was a clump of ten or twelve beeches perched upon a little knoll, over-hanging the road which led to the nearest town from Ale Manor and village. A few were decayed and hollowed out, leaving little but the bark standing, with two or three long branches stretching forth, and still bearing the verdant livery of youth, even in their extreme old age. Others were in their vigorous prime, too regular and rounded to be very picturesque ; while one or two were in that state of half-decay which casts this peculiar tree into the most fantastic forms.

Sitting under one of those nearest to the road, from which it might be distant about fifty yards, was Emmeline Newark. She was shaded from the sun in the position which she had assumed, and, at the

same time, caught any wind that was stirring; for, blowing, as I have said, very, very lightly from the sea, it came up the deep dell from Ale Bay and along the course of the stream, seeming to pause, as if in sport, amongst the beeches, and whirling round the wooded knoll. She had a book in her hand: I know not well what it was; it might have been Pope, or Addison, or any of those stars that were setting or rising about that time—never mind a mixed metaphor, dear critic. She was in one of her musing moods, however, and the book lay unnoticed on her knee, as, leaning slightly on one side, with her shoulder supported against the smooth bark of the beech, and her eyes peeping out from under the branches towards the opposite hill and the blue sky above it, she lay, rather than sat, in an attitude of exquisite grace.

The sun was very near the meridian, and his brightness would have been oppressive to the eye, had it not been that the cool colouring of the scene around, the

green trees, the brown hills, and the grey rocks, seemed to drink up the rays, or return them softened and mellowed to the eye.

She had sat there some time, without seeing a living creature or a moving thing, except a large bird of prey, which kept whirling in immense circles far over head. But now a man on horseback, in the garb of a servant, leading another horse by the bridle, passed slowly along the road, without noticing her, and took his way up towards the old Manor House. She gazed after him with that feeling of curiosity which is generated by a solitary state of life. She marked him along the road till it was lost in the wood, and as she did so, some one on foot was heard to pass along under the trees, as if coming up a very steep path from the little village.

"It is Richard," she thought, peeping under the branches. "Poor boy! he has not gained

much during the last twelve-months. He will be a child all his life, I fear."

She then turned to the pages of her book, and began to read. Suddenly the page grew somewhat dim; and she looked up, saying to herself—"There are clouds coming over." But, though she could not actually see the sun, the sky was bright and clear. She read on; but the page grew more and more dim, till at length she could with difficulty distinguish the words.

"A thunder storm must be coming," she thought, shutting the book and rising to take her way home; but, on stepping from beneath the branches of the old beech tree, not a cloud was to be seen upon the sky. All was clear, though the light had diminished to the faintest gleam of twilight; yet it did not resemble either the morning or the evening light. There was no rosy glow, no golden tint, in east or west; a dim grey shadow had spread over

earth and sky ; and Emmeline could see here and there a star gleaming faintly in the deep concave above, as if night had just fallen, while a dark shadow occupied the place of the sun, with the exception of a narrow crescent of light still remaining at one edge. A sudden and instinctive feeling of terror seized her before reason had time to act. She knew not what she feared ; and yet this sudden darkness, this unexpected extinction, as it were, of the great light of the heavens, seemed something very awful. Her heart beat, and her breath came thick. The next instant, however, she said to herself : " It is an eclipse. How strange and wonderful ! It is not surprising that men in other days looked upon these thing as portents. I could well nigh be superstitious myself under that black sky at noon-day. The sun is now taking the form of a ring of light, with a dark globe in the centre."

She paused to gaze upon it ; and strange, wandering thoughts came through her

mind, engrossing all her attention. She saw not that, from the edge of the wood, behind and above her—where it stretched out with a sort of spur upon the hill side, leaving a space of about two hundred yards of clear soft turf, only broken by that knoll and clump of beech trees between itself and the road—she saw not that there stole quietly forth, first one figure, and then another, and, with stealthy steps over the soft herbage, came creeping down towards her, keeping the beeches between her and them. The light indeed was hardly sufficient to show her their movements, even had not those trees formed a sort of leafy screen ; but, as it was, they were completely hidden ; and, not till their steps were close to her, was she aware that she was not alone on the hill-side. She started at the sound of a footfall, and turning round beheld two strangers with their faces blackened. She would have run away towards the house ; but, at the same moment, one man caught

her by the arm and the other seized her shoulder.

“*Pardie', nous l'avons!*” cried one of them.

The other said nothing, but strove to draw her away in a different direction from that of the house.

All the warnings she had received now flashed upon her memory ; all the terrors which Sir John Newark had instilled took possession of her in full force ; and, without pausing to question or remonstrate, she screamed aloud for help, while the two men, in spite of her resistance, forced her on in the path which they had chosen.

“They won't hear,” said the one to the other, in French. “The wind blows the other way. This eclipse was a lucky chance.”

Still, however, Emmeline screamed ; and the one who had as yet said nothing, put his hand over her mouth to smother her cries, whispering, at the same time, but still in French, what seemed persuasions to

come quietly, and promises which she neither heard nor understood.

Freeing her lips, she screamed again and again ; and then—oh, blessed sound !—she heard the noise of a horse's feet upon the road.

“ It is my guardian,” she thought ; and another long piercing cry succeeded.

It caught the ear of the horseman on the road. He checked his horse, and beheld by the light which was becoming now more strong, two men dragging a woman up the hill. There was a steep bank between the road and the turf above ; but he struck his spurs fiercely into his horse's sides ; and, with a straining effort, the fine powerful beast overcame the obstacle, reached the turf, and sprang forward. Stretching out, as if running a race, the horse, in a few seconds, brought him up to the spot where Emmeline was, and even a little beyond it, before his career could be checked. The latter circumstance, however, was fa-

vourable; for it placed the rider between the men and the wood, and also showed him, in passing, that they were determined to resist his interference. As soon as they perceived that the intruder upon their enterprise was alone, the swords of both were drawn; and one of them said to the other, in a low voice, and in the French tongue,

“Keep him off, while I take her on. Three hundred yards farther, and we shall be within hail of the boat’s crew.”

But the stranger was not so easily to be disposed of. His horse was wheeled rapidly; his sword was out of the sheath in a moment; and in another instant he was upon the two men, from whom Emmeline was struggling hard to free herself. As if he at once divined their plan, he suffered the one who had let go his hold of the lady to advance, sword in hand, and aim a blow at him, unreturned, merely making his horse swerve to avoid it; and,

pressing hard upon the other, who still held the poor girl in his strong grasp, he forced him to turn and defend himself. The rescuer was obliged to play a wary game, however ; for the other man ran up behind, as if to strike him from his horse ; but, practised in every military exercise, although the animal he rode had never been trained in the *manége*, he governed his steed with perfect ease with the hand and heel, wheeling him now upon one, now upon the other, parrying a blow here, aiming a blow there ; and, in the end, compelled the one who had still the young lady in his grasp, to quit his hold in self-defence.

At the same moment, the loud, deep barking of a large dog was heard ; and one glance showed the gentleman on horseback an enormous hound, followed quickly by a human figure, running over the hill towards them from the lower wood in which the road seemed to lose itself.

The same sight met Emmeline's eye also ; and, finding herself free, she sprang for-

ward towards the new comer ; but, exhausted with struggling and with terror, she fell upon the green turf before she had gone twenty yards.

“ Run, run, Matthew !” cried the man who had last retained his grasp of Emmeline, still speaking in French ; and then, with one of the blasphemous and horrid oaths of which that language has a copious vocabulary, he added : “ She has escaped us ! Through the wood and by the path round at the back ! I will show you the way down the cliff.”

Thus saying, he turned to fly with his companion ; but still he retired with a sort of sturdy cautiousness, stopping short every ten or twelve paces, and turning round, ready for defence. The stranger, however, seemed in no degree disposed to follow him. His object was accomplished in freeing a lady from the hands of two ruffians : he had no knowledge of the circumstances ; and, after pausing for an instant to make sure that the scoundrels had

no intention of returning, he sprang from his horse and approached the poor girl, who was now raising herself upon her arm.

"I hope you are not hurt, madam," he said. "Do not be alarmed. The villains have fled, and will not return in a hurry, I think. At all events, I have marked one of them, so that we shall know him in time to come."

"Oh, thank you, thank you! How much I owe you, sir!" was all that Emmeline could utter. At the same time, the great deer-hound rushed forward as if to spring at the stranger; but, with that peculiar and marvellous instinct by which dogs of a noble race distinguish friends from foes, he suddenly checked himself in full career, dropped his tail and ears, and, turning from him with a shy and wary glance, as if yet not quite satisfied, approached the lady and licked her hand, fixing his large, bright eyes upon her face.

"Let me assist you to rise," said the stranger, offering Emmeline his hand ; "here comes some one, under whose protection, doubtless, you can be quite safe.—Ha, my young friend, Richard Newark ! You have made your appearance to help us just at the happy moment."

The young lad caught his hand and shook it heartily, exclaiming :

"What is the matter ? What is the matter ? I heard Emmeline screaming, and saw you fighting with two men, and just slashing one of them upon the forehead.—Why, what a gay coat you've got on ! You were dressed in brown in London."

"If it had not been for this gentleman's assistance," said Emmeline, rising slowly, "I should have been carried away, I know not whither—over the seas, I think ; for they talked of a boat."

"Ay, he always comes up to help people when they are in need," replied the lad,

gazing with a look of affectionate regard at Smeaton. “This is the gentleman, Emeline, who came and made a jelly of the big footman who knocked me down. There are some people that have the luck of it. I should like to do such things too ; but I am always too late. I came out to meet him ; for his servant and baggage arrived a minute or two ago ; but I thought he would come along the road, else I should have been upon the hill-side in time. That brute, Brian, too, ran after a hare ; and I sat down and reasoned with him, asking him if it were decent, in a gentleman of his high degree, to run after small game like that. He was too much ashamed of himself to make any answer ; but he lifted up his great, hairy nose, and wagged his tail, as much as to say, ‘Don’t talk any more about it.’—Carried you away, Emeline !” he continued, in his rambling manner. “Where could they want to carry you ? They did not hurt you, did they ?”

"They pinched my wrists till they will be black and blue, I am sure," replied Emmeline, simply. "But we had better make haste to the house," she continued, "for there may be more of them." Then turning, with a graceful inclination, to Smeaton, while she leaned upon Richard's arm, she added, "My guardian, Sir John Newark, will be most grateful to you, sir, as I am; for had it not been for your courage and kindness, a scheme, against which he has often warned me, would probably have proved successful, notwithstanding all his precaution."

"I am more than sufficiently rewarded by having rendered you a service," replied Smeaton, in a very common-place tone; but the next instant he fell into a fit of musing, which was only interrupted by young Newark exclaiming, with a laugh—

"I would sooner do a day's work at digging, under a hot sun, than have to catch your horse on this hill side. He'll be at Exeter before to-morrow morning.

Talking of the sun, Emmeline, did you ever see anything look so funny as that great, shining gentleman did just now—just as if he were sick of a surfeit. He's not much better yet, and looks black enough at the world, though he has now got a cocked-hat of light set on one side of his head. Old Barbara tells me it is an eclipse, and that it's all very curious. She saw one just like it, in the reign of King William, of blessed memory, when all the birds went to roost, and the pigs hid their heads in the straw. I think it more disagreeable than curious.—But look! he has caught his horse! He'll catch anything, or anybody—perhaps you, my pretty bird, before he has done."

A slight blush came upon Emmeline's face.

"Where are your wits rambling, Richard?" she said. "You should have helped him, Richard."

"Should I?" said the boy, with a start. "I am sorry I did not, then; for I would

willingly help him in anything. He is a fine fellow ; but I never know what I ought to do, Emmeline. So you must tell me, while he is here."

"Does your father expect him?" asked Emmeline. "He never mentioned it to me."

"Expects him as sure as he does Christmas," replied the lad ; "but, like a wise man as he is, he held his tongue, knowing the quality of expectation, which, like a bad sword-blade, breaks through the middle when you most rely on it."

"That is not your own, Dick," observed Emmeline, smiling. "You have borrowed it from some one."

"Stole it, dear Emmy," returned Richard, laughing ; "pilfered it from a player in a lace jacket, who strutted about, periwigged, in a barn at Putney last year, and called himself, Her Majesty's Servant.—But here comes Colonel Smeaton again, with his horse in tow, as the fishermen say. How I

should like to be a colonel ! I wonder if I shall ever be a colonel, Emmy?"

Before the young lady could answer, Smeaton had rejoined them, and now walked by their side towards the house. He had cast off his fit of musing, and conversed with his two young companions gaily and easily, from time to time asking Emmeline questions in regard to the shameful attack which had been made on her, and endeavouring to ascertain if she had any knowledge of the persons concerned, or the motives by which they were actuated. She was obliged to confess her ignorance, however, merely telling him that her guardian had often warned her that such an attempt was likely, but had entered into no explanations.

It seemed now to have become Richard Newark's turn to muse; and they had very nearly reached the house before he opened his lips. Then looking up suddenly, he brought forth the fruit of his meditation.

"I've been thinking, Smeaton," he said, "whether we ought not to get all the servants together, and see if we cannot catch these kidnappers."

"They are gone, I am afraid, beyond recall," answered Smeaton, gravely.

"Not they," cried the boy. "They cannot get away except by the river, and we can stop them at the mouth. They took the path up to the top of Ale Head; and unless they have got wings, they cannot get down there. If I unchain the bloodhound and put him on the scent, he'll find them out for us in a minute."

"Nay, don't, don't, Richard," said Emmeline. "You must not leave the house without defence; for no one can tell how many there may be."

Neither did Smeaton give any encouragement to the boy's proposal. He looked grave and thoughtful; and the matter seemed to drop of itself. The three entered the house together; and Emmeline

led the way into the smaller saloon, where Sir John Newark was accustomed to sit in the morning. While, with a timid grace, Emmeline was performing the various offices of hospitality towards Smeaton, Richard Newark slipped quietly out of the room, hurried to the great court-yard, and ran towards an immense blood-hound, which was chained to a kennel near the stable-door. The beast bounded up on his hind legs, tugging at his chain, to caress his young master, who, kneeling down unceremoniously in the dirt, threw one arm about the hound's thick throat, and, while the animal licked his face all over, struggled to unfasten the chain from the collar.

"Don't unchain the dog, Master Richard," said a groom from the stable. "He'll hurt some one, if you don't mind."

"That is just what I want him to do, Bill," replied the lad. "You come along with me. Two men have been trying

to carry off Emmeline ; and Brian, who hunts by eye, was of no use."

" Have they got her, then ?" cried the man, starting forward.

" No, no. Colonel Smeaton came up and broke their noddles," replied Richard ; "but I want to catch them. So I have left the three—that is to say, the lady, the colonel, and the dog—in the house, and have come for old Bellmouth, here, to help me. You come along with me, Bill, and make haste. We'll put the hound upon their steps. Then, if he tears them to pieces, it's their affair and his, not mine."

As he spoke, he took his way out of the gates, the dog bounding on before. The groom caught up a stout stick and followed, asking his young master a number of questions, to which he got no satisfactory answer. By the shortest way, partly through the wood, and partly over the hill-side, young Richard Newark, soon reached

the spot where he had seen Emmeline on first being alarmed by her cries. Here, thrusting the dog's nose to the ground with both his hands, he cried,

“ Seek, Bellmouth, seek !”

The enormous brute snuffed round and round, for a moment, without any other noise but the snorting of his nostrils as they were pressed upon the turf ; and then the lad called him forward, a few paces higher up, still repeating the cry—

“ Seek, Bellmouth, seek !”

The dog obeyed, moving hither and thither, still keeping its muzzle to the ground—and, at length, with a loud yell, sprang forward in the exact direction which the men had taken. Richard Newark and the groom followed as fast as their feet would carry them, cheering on the dog with loud cries ; but, dashing away without a fault, he soon outstripped them, giving tongue from time to time, as if to lead them on. He took his course straight through the spur of wood,

over the brown hill beyond, and up in a direct line towards the top of Ale Head. The two pursuers caught sight of him again, as soon as they had passed the wood, rushing in a straight line towards the crags ; and the groom remarked,

“ We shall catch them now, Master Richard, or the dog will have them into the sea.”

The moment after, however, the dog disappeared ; for Ale Head, before it breaks off into the abrupt rocky promontory which actually beetles over the waters, is capped, as it were, with a rise in the ground, from which the turf slopes down to the edge of the cliff. So that what was beyond that highest point, and between it and the precipice, could not be seen. On reaching the top, the dog was not visible ; but they heard a loud baying from some distance below ; and Richard Newark ran forward to the edge of the cliff, while the groom exclaim-

ed—"For God's sake, take care, Master Richard!" and followed with greater caution.

When they gained the edge, however, what had taken place became visible. On a point of rock, close above the water, and reached by an exceedingly narrow path, broken, irregular, covered with loose stones, and interrupted by chasms, which, to an eye above or below, seemed impassable, stood the large bloodhound, baying with a furious disappointed bark, mingled with a sort of shrill whine; while, at the distance of about half a mile from the point, was seen a small boat rowing towards a cutter-rigged vessel lying-to about a couple of miles from the coast.

Richard Newark had paused suddenly at the edge of the cliff, and remained perfectly silent; but the groom, when he came up, exclaimed—"They have got off, sir! We are too late."

"Ay," said the lad, in a thoughtful tone,

" they must have known the place well, Bill. I did not think there was a man in England knew that way down, except myself and young Jemmie Harrison, the fisherman's son. It is not the first time they have been here. Here, Bellmouth, Bellmouth ! Mind your footing, old boy. It's the first time you ever were down there, and you've got no map."

It was some time before he could induce the dog to quit his station on the rock below and begin the ascent. Perhaps the animal did not hear the voice from above at that great distance ; but assuredly he saw his young master looking over ; for, from time to time, he raised his head towards him, with an angry howl, as if to intimate that the object of their chace had escaped. At length, however, he began to ascend ; and, with difficulty, and not, apparently, without fear, for his steps were slow and uncertain, he made his way up to the top of the precipice again, and then gave

himself a great and satisfactory shake, and looked up in Richard's face. The boy patted his head, but said nothing, and took his way back to the house in silence.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM the groom to the stable-boy, from the stable-boy to the kitchen-maid, from maid to maid and man to man, by house-keeper and old butler, the tale proceeded, till every lad and lass and old blue-bottle in the family had heard that two men had seized upon Emmeline, and had only been prevented from carrying her off to a ship near the coast by the timely arrival and the gallant daring of Colonel Henry

Smeaton, a gentleman well known to Sir John and Master Richard. True, the story suffered many variations in its course. It was embellished and improved, and gained, at every stage, as the play-bills have it, "new scenery, dresses and decorations." A great degree of confusion, too, prevailed as usual, in the way in which it was told. One of the maids in relating it to the house-keeper, either by the confusion of her own ideas or the inaccuracy of her language, made Brian, the stag-hound, act a very important and unusual part for a dog.

"Just at that moment, ma'am," she said, "Brian came rushing up ; and, with his sword in his hand, he cut one of the men a great gash across the forehead."

"Good gracious!" cried the housekeeper, in considerable alarm and surprise at this phenomenon, "how came Brian by a sword ?"

"Lawk, ma'am! I meant the gentleman," said the maid. "He cut the man upon the head just as the dog came up."

We cannot, however, dwell upon all these variations. They were numerous and not uninteresting ; but we have other things to do. Suffice it to say, all agreed in the general facts that Emmeline had been attacked and rescued, that Master Richard, and Bill, the under-groom, with Bellmouth, the blood-hound, had pursued the assailants to the very top of Ale Head, but that the latter had contrived to get into their boat and put to sea. One of the men, who had been long in the family and knew Sir John Newark's propensity to gather as speedily as possible all the details of what took place in the house during his absence—a quiet, thoughtful, secret sort of man—walked out leisurely along the road as soon as he had collected all the facts, knowing well that his master would not be long ere he returned from the neighbouring town to which he had gone in the morning. He met him sooner than he expected, indeed ; not more than a mile and a half from the house. Sir John was evidently anxious

and in haste ; for he was keeping his horse and his attendants, three or four in number, at a very quick trot, even against the breast of the hill. The man ventured to stop him, however ; and the first words of the knight were—

“ The lady—Emmeline ? There has been a strange sail seen off the coast.”

“ Ay, Sir John,” answered the man ; “ and they had very near carried her off. Two of the men got hold of her, your worship, not far from the house either ; but just then a gentleman, coming to visit you—one Colonel Seaton, or Smeaton, or something of that kind —heard her screams as he was riding along the road, galloped up, and set her free. They say he cut one of the men terribly across the head. At least, so Master Richard told me ; for he was running to help her too, and saw the fight, as they did not give the matter up without a tough struggle.”

“ Thank God, she is safe !” said Sir John Newark. And, though the motives which

produced this pious exclamation might have been of a somewhat mixed nature, he certainly did seem to rejoice sincerely.

Pushing his horse on, even faster than before, he rode with great rapidity to the house, sprang from his horse's back like a young man, and hurried into the small saloon, where he heard voices speaking.

The whole party within were laughing and talking gaily; but the agitation and anxiety on Sir John's countenance at once showed them that he had heard of the events, which they themselves had nearly forgotten in pleasant conversation, and made Emmeline feel grateful for the deep and affectionate interest which he seemed to take in her safety. He shook Smeaton warmly by the hand, saying,

" You have rendered me an inestimable service, Colonel Smeaton, and added to all I owe you for the gallant defence of my son. I learn, too, from London, that Lord Stair has, at your demand, dismissed from his service the ruffian who struck the

boy. So it seems you are not only our good angel, but a very powerful angel too."

" My dear sir, you overwhelm me," replied Smeaton, laughing. " I have no more merit in the matter than a man who, favoured by good luck, picks up a purse and restores it to its right owner. As for Lord Stair, I made a point of seeing him immediately; and, upon due representation of the man's conduct, vouched for by my word of honour, his own sense of justice induced him to dismiss him, without any threat or means of compulsion whatsoever. It seems the Earl was an intimate friend of my late father in early-years; and that consideration, indeed, might in some degree have influenced him. I trust this fair lady will escape further danger, whatever may be the cause of the attack made upon her; and we were considering just now, what would be the best means of protection for her, without subjecting her to the sort of captivity to

which she seems inclined to condemn herself, for the faults of others. Your son was proposing for her guards a brace of fierce mastiffs, to go with her wherever she goes ; but I contend that he should be, at least, one of her guards himself ; and I doubt not, now he has left school, you will arm him with a sword in so good a cause."

Smeaton spoke jokingly ; but Sir John Newark looked somewhat grave.

" I am afraid," he remarked, " Richard would not know how to manage a sword. He has never learned to fence."

" Let me have 'the honour of teaching him," said Smeaton. " I will answer for it, that, in one week, I will make him a very fair swordsman, whether it be with the small sword, the broad sword, or any other weapon of the kind. I have always been reckoned the most expert in my regiment at those exercises."

Sir John was evidently well pleased, and the boy delighted.

"I trust that he will have the benefit of your kind tuition for more than one week," said the former ; "and it is certainly advisable that he should accompany his cousin, whenever she goes any distance from the house. But surely, Colonel Smeaton, you have not come all this way from London, to spend but a week in our rural scenes ?"

"Oh, no," replied Smeaton. "I shall remain in this part of the country, I dare say, for six weeks ; but I cannot intrude upon your hospitality for so long a period."

"If you quit our house one day before," exclaimed Sir John, warmly, "we shall conclude that you think our hospitality very cold, or our house very dull."

His manner was so sincere, and he pressed his invitation so heartily, that Smeaton accepted it without much hesitation, and again turned the conversation to young Richard Newark, pointing out the advantage it would be to him, especially

in the somewhat unsettled state of the country, to learn various manly exercises early.

"They might be of great service," he said, "both to him and to you, Sir John. As I came through Dorchester, I saw two of the magistrates of the town taken to the pump in the market-place, and pumped upon till they were well nigh drowned, because they would not cry 'High Church and Sacheverel for ever!' Their cowardly lackeys ran away, and left them to their fate; and I did not feel myself called upon to interfere; but I am convinced that one man, with a little knowledge of horsemanship and the spadroon, would have dispersed the whole mob, and saved their worships a wetting."

"It served them right for their thick-headedness," said Sir John Newark, laughing; "and I can easily guess that you did not find yourself called upon to interfere. Your observations are none the less just, however, Colonel Smeaton; and I will send

to Axminster to-morrow, for a good light sword for Richard. My own are all too heavy."

"Pardon me," said Smeaton. "I will supply him with a very serviceable weapon, and as light as he could wish. It was manufactured for the late Duke of Burgundy, when about your son's age, and fell into my hands by accident. It is with the remainder of my baggage, which will be here to-night or to-morrow. You shall get him the less deadly weapons—a pair of fencing-foils, masks, and spadroons; for we must be mindful of the old proverb, and not jest with edged tools."

"There, Richard, you are at the height of your ambition," said Emmeline, to the lad, while Sir John was pouring forth thanks upon Smeaton; "but I suppose, dear boy, with you, as with others, the ambition of to-day will not be the ambition of to-morrow; for that same steep ascent of ambition, the poets tell us, is like the mountains losing their heads in the

sky, where we go on climbing, never thinking ourselves sufficiently high till we are above the earth.—But what is the matter with you, Richard ? You look sad !”

“ I do not know why it is, Emmy, dear ; but great kindness always seems to make me sad,” replied Richard in a low tone. “ If I were with that man always, I believe I should soon be a man myself.—But I fear that will never be,” he added with a sigh. “ I feel myself so much younger than other boys of my own years ; and I cannot get things into my head as they do. This noddle must have some crack in it, Emmy, to let the thoughts fly out of it as fast as they fly in. It is no better than an old pigeon-house.”

“ Hush, hush ! You must not think so,” said Emmeline. “ You will do very well, Richard, if you will but attend and be a little less heedless.”

“ I cannot attend,” said the boy. “ I never could ; and I am less heedless than you think, Emmeline.”

Then, leaving her, he went up to Smeaton's side, as he stood talking with Sir John near the window, and, laying his hand upon the Colonel's arm, said, with all the eager impatience of a child, "When shall I have the sword?"

"To-night or to-morrow," replied Smeaton, with a smile; "but, before you wear it, you must learn how to use it. The first time that you can parry three lunges running, you will be fit to wear the sword."

The boy seemed satisfied, and left the room. The conversation between the master of the house, Smeaton, and Emmeline, then turned for a few minutes to other subjects, such as the eclipse, the beauty of the scenery, the agitated state of the country; but gradually worked itself round to the strange attack which had been made upon Emmeline. Sir John asked both her and Smeaton a number of questions as to the appearance and height of the men, what they had said, and whether she had seen

them long before they seized her. As to their appearance, Emmeline could give very little information ; but Smeaton described them more accurately, saying :

“ One was nearly as tall as myself ; and it struck me that I had seen him somewhere before—perhaps in France or Spain ; but he was clearly disguised, his hair or a wig brought far over his face, and an enormous cravat tied in front. He will not be able to disguise himself so easily again, I think ; for, though I only contrived to reach him with the point of my sword, it scored his forehead pretty deeply, as I felt it grate upon the bone.”

Emmeline gave a slight shudder ; and Smeaton added :

“ Pardon me, dear lady, for speaking of such horrible subjects ; but what I did, depend upon it, was necessary ; for they seemed two desperate ruffians, determined not to give up their object without blood-shed. I trust they will never repeat the attempt.”

"I think they will not," replied Sir John Newark, musing. "They have had a lesson. But they must have been well informed; for, if the fishermen had been at home, they would not have dared to land. All the men have gone round the point, however; and the wind would not serve to bring them back speedily, even if the appearance of a strange vessel had excited suspicion. I heard of her coming upon the coast this morning, when I was ten or twelve miles distant; and I hastened back with all speed."

"Then had you any cause for alarm?" asked Smeaton.

"Oh, no, not particularly," replied Sir John, with a certain degree of embarrassment; and then immediately added—"But let me show you the apartments prepared for you, Colonel Smeaton. Everything is ready, I know, though, fearful of any disappointment, I would not give my fair ward the hope of a great pleasure of which she might be deprived."

With this courteous speech, he led the way out of the room, leaving Emmeline musing, and not altogether satisfied.

There is a feature in insincerity, which always betrays itself. I know not well in what it lies, this error of demeanour, which shows us that there is something very different flowing on under an apparently calm and clear stream of conversation. But so it has ever been; and it is hardly possible to deceive anyone well practised in the world's ways, as to the ingenuousness or disingenuousness of the persons with whom he is brought into contact. The object may not be discerned; the thoughts, the passions, the motives, the wishes, the plans, may all remain hidden; but what we see is that, the surface and the depth are different.

In the present instance, however, I must add, for the reader's information, that, in many respects, Sir John Newark's words and demeanour towards Smeaton were sincere. He was truly glad to see him at Ale Manor; he was unaffectedly

grateful to him both for delivering Emmeline and for defending his son ; he was really anxious, also, that he should remain for some time at Ale Manor. But yet a good deal was concealed ; and Smeaton, perceiving this last fact, doubted, in some degree, all the rest. At all events, he said to himself,

“ That is not a sincere man. It is clear that what the people in London told me of him, is true.”

Every care and attention had been bestowed upon the preparations for Smeaton’s comfort; two rooms in Ale Manor had been arranged for him ; for the house had abundant space for its inmates ; and the good, old-fashioned furniture, ponderous but convenient, had been freshly dusted and arranged, the windows thrown open, and free air and sunshine admitted, so that the whole bore a cheerful and pleasant look. The outer chamber had been arranged as a sort of sitting-room ; the inner contained an enormous four-post

bed, with blue velvet hangings ; and the small quantity of baggage, which Smeaton had sent on with his servant, was already deposited in the first chamber, and spread out ready for his use. A hand bell stood upon the table ; and, on introducing him into his apartment, Sir John observed,

“ I am sorry to say that, in this part of the house; there are no bells hung ; but your servant has been placed on the opposite side of the court, so that, by just opening the casement at any time, you can summon him by that instrument on the table.”

Thus saying, he left him, giving him notice of the hour of dinner, which was now approaching ; and, even before proceeding to change his traveller’s dress, Smeaton sat down in one of the large, easy chairs, to meditate over his situation and his prospects.

I shall not pause, however, to analyze his thoughts, but carry him at once to the dining-room. Nor will I dwell upon

an English dinner of the olden time, though it had some curious features. Suffice it that it passed pleasantly, and that Smeaton's easy manners and varied conversation soon removed from the mind of Emmeline the feeling of restraint produced by freshness of acquaintance. As soon as dinner was over she rose and retired. Richard Newark did the same ; for there were yet many hours of daylight left ; and his rambling habits seldom suffered him to remain long in any one spot. Sir John Newark pressed the wine upon his guest, according to the fashion of the day ; but Smeaton announced at once his very moderate habits, saying that he feared the school in which he had been brought up, did not qualify him to compete with Englishmen in the use of the bottle. He had remarked, too, that during dinner Sir John Newark, while conversing with the utmost apparent frankness, had dropped in questions with regard to foreign countries and to Smeaton's own

adventures, which he could not help thinking had a sinister object. He was, therefore, in some degree, upon his guard ; but he soon found that his companion knew more than he had imagined.

During the space of about five minutes after the dessert was set upon the table, one or other of the servants came in from time to time, to put more wine on the *beaufet*, to carry away this piece of plate or that ; but, when the last of them departed, and the door seemed finally closed, Sir John Newark stretched himself back in his chair, and said, with a very peculiar smile,

“ Now, my dear Lord, we shall be able to talk more at our ease, though I suppose it will be better for me to keep up the habit of treating you as Colonel Smeaton, rather than as the Earl of Eskdale ?”

Whatever he might feel, Smeaton did not suffer the slightest look of surprise to come upon his countenance. In truth, no

sooner had he heard that Bolingbroke had named him to Sir John Newark, than he came to the conclusion that his present worthy host had acquired a great deal of true, and probably a great deal of false, information concerning him. He was not, however, very anxious to correct any false impressions that Sir John Newark might have received ; for there were various reasons which induced him to wish that the notions of the knight regarding him, should be as vague and undefined as possible ; and he was well aware that nothing serves to puzzle and confuse the minds of very shrewd and cunning people, so much as half knowledge. It is worse than ignorance ; for it encumbers the ground. He was resolved, then, on his part, neither to tell nor explain any thing ; but to let Sir John pursue his own course, and make any assumptions which he chose.

After a moment's seeming consideration, Smeaton said, "Perhaps, Sir John,

it would be better to avoid my title both in public and in private. The name of Colonel Smeaton gives me quite as much dignity as I can well carry in this country, for the time being."

"Lord Bolingbroke informs me—and I was very sorry to hear it," continued Sir John Newark, after a pause to consider how he should pursue the attack, "that her Ladyship was very unwell when he wrote."

"She was so when I left her," replied Smeaton. "But my last letters informed me she was much better. Otherwise, I should not have ventured to protract my stay in this country."

Let it be remarked that Smeaton hesitated for a moment, at the very first word of the sentence which I have just reported. The original expression which first sprang to his lips, was "My mother;" but, for some reason, he changed it to the words *she*; and, after pausing for an instant, he added,

"Pray, what did Lord Bolingbroke say of her health?"

Sir John Newark took a letter from his pocket, and read as follows :

"The Countess of Eskdale has been very unwell, nearly at death's door. Otherwise, she would have gone over to England too, I doubt not ; for they have some lands to claim, and other matters to settle, which might require her presence also. However, she was too ill to go ; and perhaps it is quite as well that she should not go, as it would only have embarrassed his proceedings."

Smeaton listened quietly while this was read, and then only observed, somewhat drily, that the noble Lord took more interest in his affairs, than he had been aware of.

"I have had later letters," he added, "since then, and am happy to say that all danger is past."

"Then do you think," demanded Sir

John Newark, “ that her Ladyship is likely to come over ?”

“ Assuredly not,” replied Smeaton. “ She would not venture upon such a journey, without my company and protection.”

Whatever there might be in this conversation of a satisfactory kind, and in whatever degree it might affect Sir John Newark personally, certain it is that it *had* considerable effect upon him. He seemed more frank and free in his whole demeanour from that moment; to put a greater degree of confidence and trust in his guest; and even to be more anxious for his prolonged stay. He had been everything that was courteous before; but now he was warm and pressing.

I need not detail all that took place farther that night. The potations of the host and his guest were neither deep nor strong; and the dinner closed with a walk through the park and neighbourhood

in the bright evening air, rather than with bottle upon bottle, as was too much the custom in those days.

Emmeline was not to be found at the moment they set out ; Richard was rambling, no one knew where : and, during the course of their *tête-à-tête* walk, Sir John Newark tried hard, and not unsuccessfully, to converse agreeably on indifferent subjects with his young guest. He himself seemed delighted with the Earl's whole demeanour and conversation ; and, before the hour of repose, he had found a moment to tell Emmeline that Colonel Smeaton was one of the most charming and distinguished men in the world, laughingly adding,

" You must not fall in love with him, however, my dear child ; for he is a married man."

Nothing could have been a greater relief to the mind of Emmeline than this announcement ; for she was just at that age, when an instinctive inclination to fly from

those who are likely to pursue, seizes upon the heart of woman ; when a dread of the new and undeveloped sensations which are soon to take possession of her, makes her shrink shily and timidly from all that can give them birth. It is only when woman, in very early life, at least, can say to herself, as Emmeline now thought she could say, in regard to Smeaton, "There is no danger with him," that she is in peril of rushing rashly into love. Love is like all great things, affecting us with awe when we first see it from a distance, but soon growing familiar by habit and near approach.

Brought up in perfect seclusion, with few of her own sex to converse with, having none whom she could look upon as a companion, acquainted with no one near her own age, or with those feelings which produce harmony between mind and mind, often bewildered, as I have shown, by her own thoughts, and longing to pour them forth, she

was ready—I must not say, she longed, because there was no premeditation—to give her whole confidence, with the guileless heart of youth, to any one who seemed to seek it worthily.

Sir John Newark could be no companion for her. True, he was not without abilities and powers of conversation ; but all his thoughts were different from hers. He was a complete man of realities ; and, if he had any thing like imagination or fancy at all, the only purpose to which he could dream of applying such faculties, was to the devising of schemes for the promotion of his own interest or ambition. There was something about him, too, she knew not well what—perhaps it might be this very difference of thought and character, this want of harmony between their two minds—but still there *was* something which forbade confidence. It was not so with Smeaton. Even in his look there seemed to her a very winning expression. His clear,

hazel eyes, not without fire, nor even keenness, appeared to beam with high and generous soul ; and, in his whole demeanour and carriage, was that sort of chivalrous aspect which had generally, in former days, distinguished the party called Cavaliers ; with a slight touch of their free and careless gaiety, but no appearance of their reckless licentiousness. There were moments, as we have shown, when he could be calm, thoughtful, and grave enough ; but the general tone of his conversation was gay, and even playful, with no touch of satire or *persiflage*—one of the great vices of the day. Much dignity, at times, was evident, but never any haughtiness of demeanour. It gave one the idea that, confident in himself, satisfied with his own position, accustomed in all things to decide rapidly, and habituated from youth to act with ease and grace in any circumstances, he was never thinking at all of himself or his own manner ; and that always gives an additional

elegance. It was all, evidently, unstudied; and assuredly, when fair Emmeline lay down to sleep that night, she not only thought Smeaton one of the handsomest and most agreeable men she had ever seen, but lurking at her heart, was a conviction that, of all beings on earth to whom she could pour out her thoughts freely, such a man would be the foremost.

Nevertheless, she slept soon, and she slept well. Nothing in the slightest degree agitated her feelings. She was not even the least little bit in love with him; and, though, towards morning, a dream visited her pillow which disturbed her much, and from which she awoke with a beating heart, it was only memory re-enacting, with very slight variations, the scene of the preceding day, in which she had been seized by strangers, and rescued by Smeaton.

The same sensations, perhaps increasing in power, went on during the

next three days. She became, of course, more intimate with her guardian's guest, lost the timidity and restraint of first acquaintance, laughed and talked with him easily, and saw, or thought she saw, more of his mind and character ; and every thing she *did* see only tended to strengthen her first impressions. But during those three days, she was never alone with him, even for a moment. Sir John Newark was always present, and his presence—it is a curious fact, but so it was—always checked anything like free and confiding intercourse in whatever society he might happen to be. Man has his instincts, as well as the brute creation, and it seemed to be by instinct that people felt Sir John Newark was not to be trusted.

On the day after Smeaton's arrival, the whole party rode over to a town in the neighbourhood, to purchase what was needed for the instruction which Smeaton had promised to give Richard Newark.

The gay exercise, the free air, the little occupation of an hour, all made it a pleasant ride ; and the morning passed over easily enough, although there was a little bustle and excitement in the town, caused by the apprehension of a man for drinking the health of King James the Third, which was construed into a treasonable act by the worthy magistrates of the place. Their reading of the law, indeed, did not seem much to please the people, who made more than one attempt to rescue the prisoner ; but magistrates, in other parts of the country, went somewhat farther, and were known to commit a man for refusing publicly to drink the health of King George. It is strange, that some of the most tyrannical acts upon record have accompanied every movement in behalf of liberty.

On the return of the party to Ale Manor, they found that the rest of Smeaton's baggage had arrived ; and, read-

ing the lad's eagerness in his eyes, Smeaton hastened to the room where it had been deposited, and took from a long coffer, which formed one of the packages, a very beautiful sword, light, and easily wielded, with a richly chased hilt of silver and gold intermixed. Carrying it in his hand back to the little saloon in which Richard Newark was still waiting, as if anticipating his intention, the young Earl presented him with the weapon, saying, in a jesting tone, but with some earnestness of words—

“Here, my young friend, I give you a sword which once belonged to a great prince; but I must exact from you a promise, such as was exacted from the knights of old, that you will never draw it, except in the defence of a cause which you think just and righteous; for, depend upon it, if you do, though the blade is of the finest steel, and of the highest temper, it will snap asunder in your grasp.”

The boy caught his hand, and kissed

it ; and Smeaton went on, more lightly, saying—

“ To-morrow, you shall have your first lesson in the art of using it.”

“ Oh, let me come and see,” cried Emmeline, eagerly.

“ Nay, I must refuse you,” answered Smeaton. “ Every one is awkward in his first essays ; and you must not see your young cousin exhibit till he is somewhat of a master in the art of fence. Am I not right, Sir John ?”

“ Perfectly, perfectly,” replied Sir John Newark. “ You must content yourself, Emmeline, with listening to the stamping, only thankful if it does not bring the old house down ; for I can assure you an *assaut d'armes* is no joke in a peaceable dwelling.”

The lesson was given ; and certainly Richard Newark was awkward enough ; but he was proud and pleased ; and the rest of that second day was spent in rides about the country. The third day passed

much in the same manner without any event of note ; but, as the proceedings of the fourth day will require somewhat more detail, I shall reserve them for the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

AN old Norman church, built in the earliest style of that fine but somewhat heavy architecture, stands about five miles from Ale Head and Bay, upon the slope of a gentle hill, with many other hill around it. It is a large structure for the present population of the adjacent country, if one may judge from the appearance of the land immediately round. The hill is part of a long range of downs, undivided by enclosures, and covered by

short, dry sward, very much like that which spreads over Ale Head itself. No trees are to be seen as far as the eye can reach, except, indeed, two old yew trees standing close to the church, and, probably, planted there by Saxon hands long before the first stone of the present edifice was laid. So close are they, indeed, that the long branches of one of them wave against the mouldings of one of the deep, round-arched windows, and would, in stormy weather, break the lozenges of the casement were they not kept under by the pruning knife or shears. A piece of ground is taken in from the hill to form the burial-ground, and is surrounded by a low wall, with only one entrance, covered over with a penthouse raised upon high posts. By this gate, pass in and out all who come to the consecrated ground: the child, to its baptism; the gay wedding party, to the altar; the congregation, to the worship of God; the corpse, to the grave.

About three or four hundred yards below the church, in the bottom of the little valley, through which runs a stream of the clearest and brightest water, are four or five small houses, or cottages, I should call them, built of the grey stone of the country, and most of them thatched. One, however, is of two stories, and has a tiled roof. They have all their little gardens attached, and are kept in tolerably neat order ; yet, when one looks at this little hamlet from the downs above, and sees it lying grey upon the green and undivided turf, it has a desolate and neglected look, as if it had been left behind in the world's march to rest in the desert expanse around it. Except those two old yews, there is not a tree near, bigger than a currant-bush.

Neither is there any other house to be seen, look which way you will ; for the wide downs only serve for sheep-pasture, and have such a look of depopulation that, in some of the slopes of the ground, one

might fancy one was standing alone upon the earth, just after the universal deluge had subsided. I know not whether it looks more lonely when all the heavens are covered with grey clouds, or when the bright sun shines upon it from the broad, undimmed sky.

Nevertheless, when the musical bell rings on the Sabbath morn from the old pale tower, the desert seems to waken into life ; and people come streaming over the hills—now a solitary man or woman, now a group of two or three, now a family, young and old, age and boyhood, now a group of children, sporting as they run. The scene is all changed ; and it is very pleasant to behold.

Within that church, too, are records of other days which would seem to show that the neighbourhood was not always so scantily peopled as at present. The grave-stones in the churchyard, indeed, are not thick or many ; and you can walk at ease, without stumbling, over the little mounds

where rest the mortal remains of the peasantry. But within, against the walls, and even let into the pillars, are many tablets of marble, black or white, recording virtues and good qualities, and affection and mourning, which have now left no other memorial behind them. In the aisles, too, and in the chancel (for the church is built somewhat in the form of a cathedral), are various very beautiful monuments of different ages: the mail-clad warrior, spurred and sworded, the pilgrim from the Holy Land, even a mitred abbott, judges, and statesmen, and soldiers of a later day—ay, and the tomb of an infant princess—are there; while, on the pavement on which you tread, the old, stained glass window at the east end, the only one remaining, sheds its gem-like colours upon slabs of marble, bearing inscriptions and effigies in brass.

Various are the names which appear in different parts of the church; but, wherever the eye looks, more frequently than any

other, will be found that of Newark. Statues under which that name is written, in old Gothic characters, are amongst the Crusaders; and on one black marble figure, near the font, is a good representation of the heavy plate-armour of the days of Henry VIII., while above hangs a silken banner, of which neither the original colour, nor the emblems, can be discovered through the dust and mould encumbering it. Nearer to the communion-table is the monument of another Newark, fresher than the rest, while an inscription below, in modern characters and in bad Latin attests that the form above represents a gallant soldier of the name of Newark, who fell, bravely fighting for his king, on Naseby field. He is represented, certainly, not in the most classical costume, with a buff coat, large boots, and the end of a lace cravat finely sculptured on his chest. The features are not distinguishable; for, after the monument was raised—and it was a bold thing in those days to raise it—Crom-

well's soldiers got possession of the church, and with hammers, or perhaps the pommels of their swords, sadly mutilated that statue and many others. It would seem that the family of Newark had been steady loyalists; for, on a tablet hard by, is an inscription to the memory of that warrior's brother, erected during the reign of Charles II., and stating that he died while in exile with his king.

On the morning of the fourth day after Smeaton's arrival at Ale Manor, a ladder was placed against the side of the church, and an old man, with something like a reaping-hook in his hand, was mounted upon one of the high rounds chopping away at the branches of the yew-tree, which approached too close, as I have said, to the window. He was far advanced in life; and his coat, thrown off, lay at the foot of the ladder. He had on, however, a waistcoat with woollen sleeves. His thin and shrunken nether man was warmly clothed, and to judge from his dress, he

was well to do in life. He had a fine bald head, with scanty white hair upon the temples; but his brow was knit as well as furrowed, and a sort of sarcastic expression played about his mouth, which was not altogether agreeable. Otherwise his features were good; and on looking at his face, one did not well know whether to think it pleasing or not.

While he was still hewing away, the solitude of the scene was somewhat disturbed by the trotting of a horse up to the door of one of the houses below, over which hung a large, straggling bush, with an inscription underneath, to the following effect:

“THE NEWARKE ARMES. GUDE BEDS AND
FUDE FOR HOSS AND MAN.”

The animal which now trotted up to the door of this very rural inn was certainly what the worthy landlord might denominate a “*hoss*,” but it looked much more like

a barrel on four legs, and those not very long ones. It was, in fact, a little short, pursy galloway, as fat as it could be; and this fat must have been of a very durable kind, for though the dust with which it was covered, and some splashes of mud upon its legs, seemed to indicate that it had come a long way, yet it had certainly lost none of its bulk by the process of perspiration. It was sleek and well to do, in short; and when its master stopped at the little public-house, it stretched out its nose, as if prepared to ask the first person who appeared, if it could have the dinner and bed which the inscription promised. The rider was a short, fattish man, somewhat resembling his beast, but rather more gaudily attired; for the pony contented himself with a coat of grey, while he who bestrid him was dressed, like Joseph, in a garment of many colours.

The old man upon the ladder heard the horse's feet on the road, and turned round

to gaze, resting from his work the while. The sight of a stranger in the place seemed to give him no pleasure. He was callous to all such things ; and he only set his jaws tight together, and mumbled something to himself. A boy, and then an old woman, came out from the house. The stranger dismounted, took his saddle-bags from the pony's back, and entered the little dwelling. The boy led the pony round to the rear of the house ; and the old man assailed the yew tree again.

If, however, he thought he was to go on uninterruptedly that morning, he was mistaken ; for, in about five minutes more, the stranger walked up to the gate of the church-yard, advanced to the foot of the ladder and looked up. The other took no notice of him whatever, except by stretching forth his arm, and, with greater strength than one might have believed him to possess, striking off a somewhat thicker branch of yew than usual, which fell upon the visitor's head and knocked his hat off.

"Ay! ashes to ashes, dust to dust!" muttered the old man, with a slight smile curling the corner of his mouth.

The other picked up his hat, brushed off the dust with his coat-sleeve, and then, without any observation on the accident, raised his voice, saying,

"I wish you would come down, sexton, and let me into the church."

"What makes you think I am sexton?" asked the old man, gruffly. "I never buried you or any of your kin."

"No, but you look like old father Time," answered the other, laughing; "and *he* buries all men."

"Then you should take me by the forelock," answered the sexton, whom the joke seemed to mollify a little; "and I have no forelock to take. So you are out, master. I *am* the sexton, however. But what do you want in the church?"

"I hear you have some fine statues there," replied the other; "and I want to see them."

But the old man was not yet satisfied.

“ Why, what do *you* know about statues ? ” he asked, running his eye over the round, fat, unstatue-like figure of the other, with a somewhat contemptuous look.

“ More than you do, old boy,” replied the visitor, “ though perhaps you have lived amongst them all your life ; for I have made them all my life ; and, depend upon it, there is no such way of knowing a thing as making it.”

“ That depends upon the workman,” answered the sexton, beginning to descend the ladder. “ I have made graves all my days, and yet don’t know them as well as many who are lying underneath there. But I’ll let you in,” he added, in a more placable tone ; “ for they are fine monuments, finer than any for a hundred miles round ; and, if you *do* know anything about such things, you’ll say so.”

When he reached the ground, he picked

up his coat, fumbled in his pocket till he got hold of a large bunch of keys ; and then, walking round to the door, opened it. The stranger entered ; and his guide followed, with his back bowed and his gait somewhat halting. He had the same sort of cynical expression on his countenance as before ; but the visitor's first exclamation seemed to please him ; for all the pride of his nature—and every man has some pride—centred in his church and its contents.

“ Ay, this is something like ! ” exclaimed our good friend, Van Noost ; “ I have not seen anything like this in a ride of a hundred and fifty miles.”

“ Dare say not,” observed the sexton. “ Did you come all that way to see it ? ”

“ No,” replied Van Noost, who was somewhat skilful at evasions ; “ but I am very glad I *have* seen it.” And, walking on, he began to scan the various monuments with critical eyes.

“ Why, the barbarians have been knock-

ing the noses off!" he exclaimed, after a momentary glance at one of the tombs.
" Why did you let them do that?"

" Because I could not help it," answered the sexton, with a growling laugh ; " seeing I was a baby and they strong men when that was done ; and yet I am three score and ten, come Martinmas."

" Ay, Cromwell, that devil, Cromwell, and his sacrilegious fools !" cried Van Noost. " They had no more taste or judgment than pigs in Smithfield."

" That's true—that's true," cried the old sexton, chuckling. " I remember them well enough ; for I was a school-boy when old Noll died, and heard him preach once. Those might understand him who could. To me, he seemed to be talking nothing but nonsense ; so I grinned ; and one of his soldiers gave me a thump in the side with his fire-lock which nearly broke my ribs."

" Then you have cause to remember

him," answered Van Noost, "and not to like him either. These are better times, master sexton."

"I don't know that," replied the man, gruffly. "We have got a foreigner for our king; and that's as bad as a Protector—at least, I think so. But I don't know much of such matters," he added, with a look of shrewd caution, coming upon his face. "King George may be a very good man, and Hanover rats as good as any other vermin for aught I know."

Van Noost laughed aloud, and replied with a significant nod of the head—

"They may have a rat-catcher amongst them some day soon, master sexton; but that is not my business either. Gracious goodness, how dirty these monuments are! And half the brasses are gone out of the marble!"

"Ay, they took the brass to make farthings of," said the sexton; "and, as to the dirt, how can an old man like me

keep such things clean ? Besides, I don't know how to clean them properly ; and I am afraid of spoiling them,"

"I'll tell you what, old boy," replied Van Noost ; "I am going to stay here for a day or two ; and I'll help you. I know all about it ; and, if I have time and can get a little clay, I'll cast you a leaden head and put it on that cherub at the corner. A cherub is nothing without a head you know, master sexton, because it has got no body."

"Going to stay here for two or three day !" ejaculated the sexton. "Well, that's funny ! I never knew any one stay here a minute after he could help it. Perhaps you have come down to these parts to make inquiries ?"

"No," answered Van Noost, "no ; I don't like inquiries, and always get out of their way."

The sexton put his finger to his bald forehead, and rubbed it slowly for a mo-

ment, repeating the word “ Ha !” more than once ; and then Van Noost added in his usual *pococurante* tone—

“ That is the very reason I came down here, master sexton. People were making important inquiries, which offended me ; and I left London in a fit of indignation.”

“ Ha !” said the sexton again. “ I understand. You’ll be safe enough here, master. You’ll see plenty of curlews and a sea-mew, from time to time. I’ve known a roe-deer too, in my day, down about the woody places ; but men and women are the rarest birds of all in this country ;” and laying his old hand familiarly on Van Noost’s shoulder, he added, with a laugh, “ No bailiff has been seen in these parts for forty years. That I can certify.”

“ I fear not bailiffs !” exclaimed Van Noost, in a mock tragical tone. “ Sexton, I am well to do in the world. I pay scot

and lot, and owe no man any thing—though many owe me, by the way, who will never pay me. No, no, sexton, 'tis not for debt of vile and sordid gold that men, perhaps, may seek me, but for those thin ethereal essences called opinions, which suit not with the tyranny of the times."

The sexton chuckled ; for he had a strong sense of the ludicrous ; and Van Noost's bombast amused him.

" Ay, ay," he said, laughing and coughing ; " how many a man there is who is obliged to make his heels save his head for the indiscretion of his tongue ! Now, I'll warrant you've been swaggering about London in praise of King James, till you got frightened to death for fear King George should get hold of you. But you're safe enough here, man, you're safe enough here. Sergeants and pursuivants are as rare here as bailiffs ; and it is not likely they'll be able to track you across the hills, even if a price should be set upon your head."

"There is no price upon my head," cried Van Noost, with a strong feeling of nervous apprehension at the very idea. "They could not hurt me even if they took me; but I love my liberty, master sexton, and should pine to death if I were cribbed up in a prison-cell."

"It would take a long time to pine you down even to a moderate size," replied the sexton, in a thoughtful sort of tone. "I've dug many a grave in my day; and there's only one I recollect that would have held you. You are so fat here behind."

"I have committed no crime," continued Van Noost, anxious to disabuse his companion's mind of the idea that he might be harbouring a traitor. "I have committed no crime, I say; and the blessed English law admits that men may talk treason, though they may not do it."

"Ay, the tongue, the tongue!" exclaimed the sexton. "That's what has brought you into danger, I can see well enough. It is an

unruly member, as the Bible says ; but here you will be quite safe. If I have to bury you, I ought to have a crown more for the width of the grave. I had when the fat parson died, this time thirty years ago, though his heirs said they did not like to pay for his fat. But hark ! More people on horseback all in one day ! Master, I've a notion they've tracked you close."

Poor Van Noost lost his rosy colour in a moment ; for no man liked less the idea of martyrdom than he did.

" For Heaven's sake, my good friend," he cried, as the old sexton peeped through a chink of the church door, which had been left a-jar, " for Heaven's sake, cannot you put me somewhere where they will not find me ? Let me go into the vestry!"

The sexton eyed him, with his quiet, old cynical smile. " How fond fat men are of life !" he said. " The vestry ! They'd find you there in a minute. Here,

you fool, go in there down into the vaults.
They'll not look there, I'll warrant."

As he spoke, he unlocked a small door which lay in a shady nook between two pilasters ; and, under the impulse of fear, Van Noost hurried in, without a word, taking his chance of the old man recollecting to let him out again. He saw the head of a flight of steps before him, and was rushing down, when the sound of the key turning in the lock raised up new fears in his mind ; and he paused for a moment to listen. The only sound he could hear at first was produced by the slow irregular step of the old sexton upon the pavement of the church, as he again walked towards the great door ; and then a loud manly voice from without was heard, as if saying to some one at a distance—"Walk them about till we come back. The air is keen upon these hills, even at midsummer."

The next instant, another voice answered, "I like that free fresh air. It feels like liberty."

"Liberty!" said the other voice. "Have you ever felt the want of liberty?"

"They are marvellous sweet-tongued officers," thought Van Noost, listening. But no reply was made to the question, or, if any, it was drowned by the cough of the old sexton; and, when that had a little subsided, the second voice which had spoken was heard, saying—

"We want to go all over the church, good Master Mattocks."

Van Noost trembled for the security of his hiding-place; but he was relieved in an instant; for the same voice went on saying—

"So you must show us all the monuments and tell us all about them; for this gentleman will not be satisfied with half information, I can assure you."

"That I will, my lady," answered the old man, "that is to say, all I know; for I never like to say things I only guess."

"My lady!" said Van Noost, to himself. "Ho, ho! It is a party come to

visit the church ; and I am shut up here like a rat in a rat-trap, when I could have given them much more information than that old mummy, who has dealt so long with corpses that he has caught the look of them. I have a great mind to knock to get out. They'll be in sad want of a better *cicerone*."

Caution, however, got the better of vanity ; and, after a little consideration, he began to feel his way down the steps, resolved to see what the vaults contained. At first, the place seemed dark enough ; but, as he descended, he found that he had been admitted, not to funeral vaults in the usual acceptation of the word, but to a crypt or underground church, of a much earlier style of architecture than the structure above. Low, arched windows, earthed up for at least two-thirds of their height, admitted sufficient light to render every object round dimly visible. Monuments and carvings were seen in various different

directions ; and, with true antiquarian enthusiasm, Van Noost soon forgot what was passing above in the examination of all that surrounded him.

CHAPTER VIII.

We must return here to an earlier hour in the day of which we have just been speaking. The breakfast at Ale Manor was laid in the dining-saloon, and presented a curious combination of the ancient and modern habits of the English people. Fish, meat, and various sweetmeats were spread upon the board ; a large tankard of silver, which might have served up ale at the breakfast table of Queen Elizabeth, was on the side-board ; and good Bordeaux

wine was there in another flagon, for those who adhered to the tastes of their remote ancestors. But, for delicate tastes, the more modern breakfast of coffee and chocolate was prepared. Sir John Newark was in a most gracious mood ; his son, Richard, was all life and gaiety ; and last came in Emmeline, bright and blooming from her sweet sleep, like a blush rose refreshed by morning dew. Smeaton could willingly have gazed at her long ; but he would not allow himself to do so ; and the breakfast was proceeding gaily and cheerfully, when one of the servants entered, to inform Sir John Newark that a messenger had brought a letter for him from Exeter. When the letter was delivered and opened, Sir John Newark read it, with a look of grave and anxious thought. Then, nodding to the messenger, who had waited as if for a reply, he said :

“ Get yourself some refreshment, and let his worship know that I will not fail to be there by two of the clock.”

The man bowed, and quitted the room ; and Sir John, turning to Smeaton, with the letter still in his hand, observed, with a somewhat affected laugh :

“ Here is a strange affair !”

Then, turning his eye to the page, he read aloud :

“ WORSHIPFUL SIR,

“ Whereas information has been received, that various evil designing persons are travelling about the country for seditious purposes, some of whom are reported to be proclaimed traitors, and others, persons lying under sentence of various offences and fugitive from justice ; and, as it is matter of common notoriety that, in various parts of the land, and especially at several places in this county of Devon, serious disturbances have been stirred up contrary to the peace of our Lord the King, and perilous to the state and constitution of this country as by law

established: this is to give you notice, that a special meeting of the justices of the peace for this division of the county of Devon, is summoned to assemble in this city of Exeter to-morrow, the —— day of July, in the year of our Lord 1715; and you are hereby invited and required, putting aside all other business, to attend the same in order to consult as to the best means of preserving the peace of the said county, and frustrating the designs of seditious and disaffected persons.

“(Signed) &c.”

He paused for a moment after reading the letter, and then added with a smile:

“They must have got a fright from some circumstance or other. I hope no friends of ours have given them any cause of suspicion.”

“If you allude to me,” answered Smeaton, with a frank smile, “I have not, I can assure you, Sir John, and am under so

little apprehension on the subject, that I have no objection, if you like, to ride with you to Exeter, if you feel yourself bound to go upon such a curious summons ”

“ Oh, I *must* go, assuredly,” replied the knight ; “ but you had better remain here. I shall feel more satisfied in leaving my fair ward here under your good care and protection ; for I must take several of the servants with me.”

He did not speak without some consideration ; but he was forced to decide quickly, for the ride before him was very long ; and he was anxious to avoid all appearance of disaffection to the existing government, whatever he might feel. About three quarters of an hour were spent in busy preparation ; but Sir John found an opportunity, in the midst of all his bustle, to caution his son more than once to watch carefully over Emmeline, and, if possible, not to quit her side for a moment. Richard promised, with every intention of performing ; and the whole

party stood on the terrace together to see Sir John depart. They watched him round the sweep till he disappeared into the woods ; and then Richard, with a boyish leap over a bush, exclaimed, in a gay tone :

“ Now, what shall we do ? ”

Smeaton smiled to see that, even with the simple boy, the petted and somewhat spoiled child, the presence of Sir John Newark was felt to be a restraint. He replied, however, turning towards Emmeline, and addressing her more than Richard,

“ You promised to show me some day a fine old church in the neighbourhood, with some beautiful monuments. Can we not make it the object of a morning’s ride to-day ? ”

Emmeline consented willingly, and said she would get ready directly for the expedition ; but Richard did not seem well pleased ; and, as soon as she had gone to fulfil her intention, he thrust his hands into his pockets, and said :

“ I shan’t go. I hate old churches, and

old monuments too. What the deuce is the use of going to see a pack of stones put on end ? I'll go out fishing. You are quite old enough to take care of Emmeline, I should think ; but you had better take some people with you ; for my dad is always in a terrible fright for fear somebody should get his bird out of the cage. Poor Emmeline ! I wonder she abides it so quietly. I could not, I know, if I were kept tight by a string round my leg like that."

Smeaton gave the boy no encouragement to come with them, merely answering :

" I will take care of the young lady, and warrant she shall come safely back. I will take my own servant with us ; and one or two of your people would make our party quite sufficient, even if the country were more disturbed than I believe it really is."

" Then I'll run down and get a boat at once," exclaimed Richard Newark ; and, before Smeaton could add another word,

he was bounding down the hill, like a great dog.

His companion betook himself to the stable-yard of the mansion, to give directions regarding the horses, and all the little preparations for the proposed expedition ; and then, putting on the great riding boots of the day, he returned to the terrace to wait for Emmeline. It was not long ere she joined him, gay, smiling, and happy at the thought of a pleasant excursion. She looked round for Richard, however, and asked where he was ; and, when Smeaton told her that he had declined being of the party, a grave look of anxiety and hesitation came over her face.

“ Sir John Newark,” she said, after a moment’s pause, “ does not like me to go far or into any town without the old house-keeper accompanying me.”

Her companion smiled, answering gaily :

“ But we are going to a church, not to a town ; and, on this occasion, you must let me act the old woman.”

A joke often prevails where an argument will not. The horses were brought round ; Smeaton placed his fair companion in the saddle ; and away they went, at a quiet and easy pace, with the three men following them. He was an excellent and graceful horseman, and not unwilling to enjoy, from time to time, the exhilarating sensations of a wild gallop over the green turf ; but, for some reason or other, he did not seem, on this occasion, disposed to put the horses out of a quiet canter. Down the stony road he proceeded at a walk, and only quickened his pace a very little when, turning to the left at the end of the wood, they got upon the downs. But Smeaton, was a good tactition ; and he had his reasons for what he did. Emmeline did not know that such was the case, however ; and she grew a little impatient.

“Shall we not have a gallop ?” she asked, at length, after some broken conversation on indifferent subjects.

“ Presently,” answered Smeaton, in a

quiet tone. “One cannot gallop and think calmly too.”

“Think!” echoed Emmeline, gaily. “Why should you think, Colonel Smeaton? Thinking is the most pernicious thing on earth; and what gentleman has any right to think with a lady by his side?”

“It is impossible to help thinking, and deeply too, with you by my side,” answered Smeaton, in a low voice.

Emmeline almost started—it sounded so like a compliment; but Smeaton was not a complimentary person, as she had remarked with pleasure; and she replied, after turning an inquiring glance towards him, in the same light tone, “Why so? do you judge me such an enigma?”

“Not yourself,” answered Smeaton gravely, “but your fate and history are an enigma.” He paused for a moment, and then added: “For yourself, dear lady, your character is as clear and pure as a diamond, which, if we do not see through it at once, it is because of its too

much light ; but your history, your circumstances, your fate, do constitute an enigma, which might well make any man of heart and feeling thoughtful."

He spoke very low ; but every word fell clear and distinct upon Emmeline's ear, and instantly banished her gaiety.

"It is an enigma I cannot solve," she answered. "I have tried to do so a thousand times, but in vain. Whichever way my eyes turn, it is all darkness ; and, weary with straining my sight upon the blank obscure, I have given it up, reduced to remain satisfied with knowing nothing but—which is perhaps as much as most persons know of themselves—that I am. But what is it puzzles *you* about me? What have you seen or remarked to make you believe that there is any mystery ?"

"Much," he replied : "the very circumstances in which I first saw you—an attempt to carry you off forcibly from the midst of your family and friends—the constant, feverish sort of anxiety displayed

by Sir John Newark in regard to you—his unwillingness to suffer you to hold communication of any kind with persons out of his own house."

"Is he unwilling?" exclaimed Emmeline, eagerly. "I do not think it—yet, perhaps you are right," she added gravely. "I remember—perhaps you are right. I do not recollect ever having been suffered to converse alone with any one except the people of the house, and good Doctor Boothe, who is dead. It is strange! I do not attempt to conceal from you that there *is* a mystery, even to myself."

"And you have tried to solve it, unassisted?" inquired Smeaton.

"Often and often," she answered. "Oh, what would I give to know who were my parents—what I am—what are the causes of all this anxiety about me! I have tried, but tried in vain."

"Perhaps I can assist you," said Smeaton, in a lower tone than ever. "Nay, do not start, and look round at me. Those men

behind must not see that there is anything more than ordinary in our talk. Now, let us have a gallop, if you will. I have ventured to open a subject with you, somewhat abruptly, which I have in vain sought an opportunity of touching upon from the first moment of my arrival. We must take opportunity when we find it. Now, shake your rein, dear lady. Give your jennet her head, and let us cast these ideas from us, for a moment or two. They will return before the end of our ride."

"They will not be shaken from me, let me gallop as I will," replied Emmeline. "However, let us forward." And, touching her horse lightly with her riding-whip, she bounded away some paces before her companion.

Smeaton was at her side again in a moment, however; and, when she turned her eyes towards him, as he came up sitting his horse with calm and quiet ease, motionless in the saddle, as if he were a part of the noble animal itself, she could not help

thinking him the handsomest man she had ever beheld in her life ; and so indeed he was.

To Smeaton, she was an object of great interest—ay, and I must add, of great admiration also. The exquisite beauty of her face and form was at that moment heightened, not only by a dress which displayed it to the best advantage, but by the attitudes into which the exercise threw her, calling forth innumerable graces, and by the movements of the mind springing from the conversation just past, and filling her eyes with light and eagerness. Their looks met ; and, with that sort of sudden sympathy which enables those of like character to read in an instant what is passing in the minds of others, each seemed to divine the feelings of the other. Emmeline's cheek glowed, as if she had been detected in a fault ; and Smeaton withdrew his eyes, with a thoughtful look, and made some common-place observation on the scene.

For a few minutes, they rode on at the same rapid pace, leaving the servants still farther behind them than they had previously been ; and then Emmeline drew in her rein, saying—

“ I have had enough of this. You will say I am a capricious girl, Colonel Smeaton. I wanted a gallop when you did not desire one ; and I am tired of it as soon as I have got it. But, in truth,” she added, “ I am anxious that you should go on with what you were saying. I cannot ride fast, in a state of wonder and mystery. You say you can assist me in explaining all the many enigmas of my fate. You say that you have longed to talk with me on this subject, ever since you have been at Ale. You must have very keen eyes, or Sir John Newark must have told you something about me when he saw you in London.”

“ Neither, dear lady,” answered Smeaton, looking behind to see how far off the servants were. “ I should have remarked

nothing calling for much attention, had I not had previous knowledge ; and yet, Sir John Newark would not have suffered me to enter his gates, had he been aware that I possessed any information whatever regarding you."

"Then you *do* possess information?" exclaimed Emmeline, eagerly.

"You have been an object of interest to me, dear lady," answered her companion, "for some years. This seems strange to you ; but it will seem stranger still when I tell you that, most likely, I should not have visited this part of England at all, had you not been here. But, tell me, can you be very discreet ? For much depends upon your prudence and your secrecy. If I tell you things which have been studiously concealed from you, you must put a guard upon your lips and upon your looks. You must seem as ignorant as ever of all that appertains to your own fate. That bright frankness—that free pouring forth of the heart must all be checked. You

must learn the hard lesson which the world, sooner or later, teaches to all, to conceal the feelings and the thoughts—to hide the treasures of the heart and mind, in short, from the eyes of those who would wrong us. Can you do this?"

"I will try," answered Emmeline, grave
"though I know not how I shall succeed,
for I have never yet been proved. I have
no experience in the art of concealment—
and yet," she continued, "I fear I have not
been altogether so frank as you imagine.
I cannot tell why, but there is something in
my good guardian—kind and careful of me
as he is—which prevents me from telling him
all I think—from speaking my wishes or
my thoughts upon important things. Any
ordinary favour—any common gratifica-
tion—I could ask, without fear of refusal ;
but yet the questions I most long to ask, I
dare not put ; the thoughts that are most
strong and most busy in my brain, I do not
venture to pour forth."

"It is an instinct," said Smeaton. "You

must, however, try to attain the discretion to which I have alluded ; and, perhaps, it may be better for me to say no more till you are more certain of yourself."

"Oh, no, no," said Emmeline. "Do not keep me in long suspense. I will be very prudent, indeed."

"Well, then, first let me ask you a few questions," said her companion ; "but pray speak in a low voice ; for the men are coming near, and no caution can be too great.—Can you recollect anything of your very early years ?"

Emmeline shook her head.

"Very little," she replied, "and that little, indistinct and vague. Things appear, indeed, to memory ; but they look like the ships I have seen sailing over the sea in a thick mist. I catch a cloudy outline—a strange, ill-defined form—for one brief instant, flitting by ; and then it passes into the fog again, and I see it no more."

"Let us try if we cannot render these

images more distinct," said Smeaton. "Do you recollect ever having lived in other places, different from the scenes around you?"

"No," answered Emmeline, at once. "The old house, and the wood, and the hamlet, and the stream, and Ale Head, and the bright bay, are amongst the earliest things that I remember. I do not think I ever lived anywhere else; for I can recollect little things of no consequence happening at the Manor when I must have been quite a child. I remember well crying over a broken puppet in a room that was then called the nursery. I must have been very young then; and memory goes no farther back."

Smeaton mused.

"I think it is very likely you are right," he said. "I do not know that you ever lived elsewhere; but you must have been surrounded in Ale Manor by other people than those who now dwell in it."

"Oh, yes," cried Emmeline. "Of that

I am quite sure ; for memories come across me, and trouble me like figures in a dream."

"Do you recollect a lady," asked her companion, "tall and graceful, with a smile peculiarly sweet, and a silvery voice ?"

Emmeline gazed down thoughtfully.

"Yes," she said, at length, "I think I do ; and she was very fond of me, if I remember rightly. Stay ! yes, I remember her quite well. You call her back to my mind. She led me out by the hand upon the terrace to see the soldiers go away. Oh, yes—I recollect it all quite well now."

"And who was at the head of the soldiers ?" asked Smeaton.

"I do not recollect," replied the lady, gazing forward into the air.

"Was it a tall, dark, noble-looking man, with a broad hat, and a plume in it ?" asked Smeaton.

"No, no," cried Emmeline. "He was

standing by my side ; and he took me up in his arms, and kissed me, before he mounted his horse.—How strange it is that I should have forgotten all this until now !”

“ No, perhaps not strange,” replied Smeaton. “ A single word will often wake up a long train of memories which have lain asleep for years. The association of ideas has wonderful power : like the wind, touching one string of an Eolian harp, it sets all the harmonies of the heart vibrating.—But do you recollect anything more of those times ?”

“ Not clearly,” answered Emmeline ; “ but still you have awakened enough to lead memory on, I doubt not, through many another path of the past. I see, indeed, you must know much of me and mine. I beseech you, Colonel Smeaton, tell me more.”

“ I would rather, in the first instance,” he said, “ let your own memory do all that it can do—placing it in the right road,

and letting it follow out the track, instead of prompting you by information which, after having rested in your mind for a certain time, will seem like memory.—But there, if I mistake not, is the church before us. I did not seize so eagerly your offer to show it to me without a motive, dear lady. I wanted to point out to you certain monuments which it contains, and beg you to remark them particularly, for they may afford you much information.”

“Oh, I have gazed at them for hours,” answered Emmeline, “and could extract nothing from them.”

“Perhaps you may be more successful now,” replied Smeaton. “At all events, whenever I lay my hand upon a monument, remark it particularly. If we should be alone, I may, perhaps read a comment on it at the time; but, if there is any one with us—and we must not seem particularly anxious to carry on our observations in private—I will merely lay my

hand upon the tomb I wish you to notice, and read the inscription upon it."

"But, then, do you know them already?" asked Emmeline. "Have you ever been here before?"

"Never," answered Smeaton, with a smile; "the words upon the tombs will be sufficient to guide me. But we are coming near. I had better call up the men to hold the horses."

Raising his hand, he beckoned to the servants behind, who rode up just as they reached the little gate of the church-yard.

Both Emmeline and he were very thoughtful when they dismounted; and they walked on towards the great door in silence. Just as they reached it, however, Smeaton turned, and called to the men who were holding the horses in a group, saying—

"Walk them about till we come back. The air is keen upon these hills, even at midsummer."

The rest of the conversation between himself, and Emmeline, and the old sexton, on their first entrance into the church, has been already detailed, as it was overheard by Van Noost ; and Smeaton and the lady proceeded along the nave, listening with wonderful patience to the prolix details of the old man. He pointed out to them the tomb of Sir Reginald de Newark, who had gone to the Holy Land with Richard the First, and told them what gallant deeds he had done in battle, and how he had returned to his native country to die at home of wounds received in war against the Saracens. Many a blunder did he make, confounding kings and countries and events in a very disastrous manner. But Smeaton did not correct him, and laid not his hand upon that tomb. Then they came to a large slab of grey marble, with a figure in long robes sculptured on it, having a mitre on the head, and crozier by the side, but with every feature of the face obliterated. This, the old man told

them, was the effigy of William de Newark, Bishop of Exeter, who had chosen to be buried in that church, because it stood upon the lands of the family. Still Smeaton passed on, without question or comment. Another and another succeeded ; and the old sexton was beginning to think the visitor exceedingly dull, when, approaching nearer to the communion-table, they stood opposite the monument of the gallant soldier who had fallen at Naseby.

This seemed to interest the visitor more, and stretching out his hand, he laid it on the marble, saying—

“ What a pity it is, they have so brutally defaced this fine statue !”

The old sexton entered into his usual story about it, told how the church had been occupied by Cromwell’s soldiers, and how they had made a stable of the nave. Many were the abominations with which he charged them ; and Smeaton asked several questions which helped him on wonder-

fully with his tale. The Colonel then approached the wall of the church, and, pointing to the tablet which recorded the death of another member of the family, in a foreign land, he asked the old man, after reading the inscription, whether the line had become there extinct.

“Oh, bless you, no, sir,” replied the sexton. “After the happy Restoration, this good soldier’s son returned with the king. He had been taken abroad by his uncle, who died at Breda. His monument stands there.” And leading them across to a darker part of the church, he showed them a tomb with a kneeling figure, having a sword in its hand. The inscription on the marble tablet below was very brief. It simply said—

“To the memory of Algernon, Baron Newark, of Newark Castle and Ale Manor, Knight, who died on the second day of July, 1690, this monument is erected, as a testi-

mony of love and veneration, by his widow and his son."

"That was the day after the battle of the Boyne," observed Smeaton.

The old sexton nodded his head significantly.

"Ay, sir, so it was. I recollect it well; and when they brought the body home from Ireland, these old hands dug the grave for as noble a lord and as good a man as ever lived. But it was all done very quietly, for people were in great fear of what might happen next; and the monument was not erected till two years after."

Smeaton laid his hand upon it, saying—

"It is fine in its simplicity. What became of the son who is mentioned here?"

"I don't know, sir," answered the man, shortly, and then walked on towards another part of the church, mumbling his

jaws together, as if he were muttering something to himself.

Emmeline looked up in Smeaton's face with an inquiring glance; but his only comment was by taking her hand and leading her away. He might press it gently as he did so; but he said nothing till they rejoined the old man, when he inquired, in a careless tone—

“Are there not vaults, or a crypt, to this church? From the height of the pavement, I should think so.”

“Oh, yes,” replied Emmeline, answering for the sexton. “There is a beautiful crypt.”

“Ay, but I have not got the key, my lady,” said the old man.

“Why, it is in the door, Mattocks,” rejoined Emmeline. “I saw it as we passed.”

The old sexton laughed aloud.

“That's true, my lady,” he said; “but I've got a bird in there, and that's the truth. So that I would rather not open the door

if I can help it. Not that I think *you* would tell, or this gentleman either; for it could do you no good, and might do the poor fellow some harm."

"Oh, be assured we will not tell anything," replied Smeaton. "But we must see the crypt, my good man. To me it is one of the most interesting parts of a church."

"Well, sir, must is must," answered the sexton, "and I cannot stop you, if you like to go. Only mind, you've promised not to tell about seeing any one there."

"We'll be as secret as a father-confessor," answered Smeaton, gaily; "but first, I should like to look at your register-books. Cannot we see the inside of the vestry?"

The old man gazed earnestly in his face for an instant, and then replied, coldly and repulsively—

"You can see the inside of the vestry, sir, if you like; but the books are not

there. They are always kept by the parson, under lock and key."

"Are they at his house?" asked Smeaton.

"I think not," replied the old man; "but all I know is, that they are not at the church. If you want any certificates out, you must ask the parson."

"Well, let us down to the crypt, then," replied Smeaton. "Can we see down there, think you?"

"Your eyes are younger than mine, and *I can*," answered the sexton, gruffly; and he proceeded to open the door.

"I suppose you are clerk as well as sexton?" said Smeaton, as he passed him.

"I am not regularly appointed clerk," replied the man. "I hold both offices at the will and pleasure of Sir John Newark."

There was something very significant in his tone and manner, as he said these words; but Smeaton merely smiled, and

passed on, holding out his hand to guide Emmeline in descending the steps. A few seconds brought them to the bottom ; and both looked round, with not unnatural curiosity, to see whom the old sexton had shut up in the crypt. The next minute, however, Smeaton laughed gaily.

“ Why, my good friend, Van Noost,” he exclaimed, “ is that you ? What, in fortune’s name, has brought you into this part of the country ?”

“ Ah, noble sir,” cried Van Noost, in a lamentable tone, “ what a fright you gave me a few minutes ago ! It was not fortune, but misfortune, brought me. Have you not heard that the Earl of Oxford is committed to the Tower, and that they are seeking for all his friends and adherents to clap them up in Newgate ?”

“ No, indeed,” replied Smeaton. “ Not caring much about it, I have heard little about it ; but I fancy you are frightened without much cause, my good friend ; for, depend upon it, the falcons which are now

on the wing, are checking at higher-flying game than yourself.—But what made you think of coming to this part of the world ?”

“ Why, I know it of old to be a lonely, desolate part of the country,” said Van Noost. “ Besides, I knew you were down here ; and I thought you might give me a little help in case of need.”

“ How can I do that ?” asked Smeaton. “ I have no influence with these people. But, come hither for a moment, and speak to me apart. If I can help you, I will.”

As he spoke, he led the way to the other side of the crypt, where he conversed with the statuary, for a few moments, in a low voice, saying, in the end—

“ Well, do as you like. If you find yourself safe here, stay. But, in case of any danger, you can go to Keanton, where you will be quite safe. Tell the people the word I said, and they will take care of you.”

"What a beautiful creature she is!" exclaimed Van Noost, whose eyes had been fixed on Emmeline for the last minute or two. "Dear me, what a delicious dairy-maid she would make, cast in lead!"

"More fitted for a Grace, I think," replied Smeaton, with a smile. "But, remember, go to Keanton, if you like."

Thus saying, he rejoined Emmeline and the old sexton.

The last words were spoken aloud and reached the ears both of the sexton and Emmeline. The old man muttered to himself the word, "Keanton," and scratched his head. The young lady turned her eyes quickly towards Smeaton, but made no comment at the time. The party then, followed by Van Noost, commented on the various things they saw; and the worthy artist in lead, enlightened them, from time to time, with opinions on the various monuments. No part of the conversation, however, would be very entertaining to the reader; and with regard to

the monuments themselves, only one seemed, even to Smeaton, worthy of remark : this was a small tablet fixed in the lower part of a wall, bearing inscribed upon it the following words :

“ To the memory of Edward and Henry Newark, sons of Henry Algernon, third baron Newark. They died in infancy.”

There was no date ; but the monument was comparatively new. Dust, indeed, lay on the marble, somewhat obscuring the letters, with a softening effect, like that of Time on memory of sorrow ; but the pure white stone had not yet acquired the yellow tint of age and decay.

“ I suppose that tablet has not been long put up,” said Smeaton, touching it with his hand.

“ Sixteen years ago, sir, come the day after Michaelmas,” replied the old sexton ; and there he stopped, evidently not disposed to enter into any particulars regard-

ing the later branches of the Newark family.

Smeaton, however, asked no more questions ; but, shaking hands with Van Noost, and giving the old man a piece of money, which seemed more than he expected, left the church, and re-mounted with Emeline.

The lady and her companion rode on for a few moments in silence ; but, at length, Smeaton said, bending his head and speaking low,

“ Do you comprehend what you have seen ? ”

She shook her head gravely, and then replied—

“ It is like seeing the picture of a city we never visited. There are houses, and streets, and public places ; but, unless we have a guide or a map, we know not what they are. The monuments I have already seen ; the names upon them I have heard before ; but know not to whom or by whom they were erected.”

Smeaton paused, and gazed at her earnestly, as if he hesitated to proceed.

"Dear lady," he said, at length, "I needs must trust you, or rather must trust to your own discretion ; for it is yourself and your future fate which is to be influenced by your prudence or imprudence. Let me warn you, however, that your own happiness and the possibility of your obtaining farther information depend upon your concealing from every one that you have received any information at all ; but I believe you have a spirit of sufficient power, Emmeline, to govern your words, and even looks, when you know that so much is at stake."

He called her Emmeline for the first time—perhaps before the length of their acquaintance justified it ; but it sounded very pleasant to her ear ; and, indeed, that day's ride and the matters of deep interest which had been discussed between them, had drawn them closer to each other

than if they had been acquainted many months.

"I will be prudent and careful, indeed," she replied. "I should ill repay your kindness, if I neglected your warning for a moment."

"Well, then," replied Smeaton, "you have seen just now the monument of your ancestor who fell at Naseby; that of his son, your grandfather, who died the day after the battle of the Boyne; and a tablet to the memory of your grandfather's brother, the father of Sir John Newark—"

"And my father?" interrupted Emeline—"my father?"

"Of that, hereafter," replied Smeaton. "This is enough for one day surely; but I may add that the little tablet in the crypt which we last saw, commemorates the death of your two brothers in infancy. They were older than yourself, but perished early.—And now, dear lady, I have told you thus much in order to win your confi-

dence ; for I may yet have to ask you to trust me in many things ; and, in the very first place, I must crave a great boon from you, which is this, to give me every opportunity—nay, to make opportunities—of conversing with you in private ; for much yet remains to be said—nay, perhaps much to be done ; and I can clearly see that Sir John Newark will not often let our conferences be unwatched, if he can help it.—Can you trust me, Emmeline ?”

“ Oh, yes, I think I can ; nay, I am *sure* I can,” she answered. “ Yet I do not know how I shall manage ; for I am unaccustomed to such things. I thank you much for what you have told me ; but I must—indeed I *must*—know more. I am not such an enigma to myself as I was ; but still there is a cloud over one part of my history which must be cleared away, although I suppose I shall find to the end that there are enigmas in everything in this world. Do you know that

even you are beginning to be an enigma to me?"

"How so?" exclaimed Smeaton, looking at her frankly as she gazed, with a smile, in his face.

"I will tell you," she said. "You bade that man in the crypt go to Keanton, if he liked, as if you were its master. Now, I always heard that Keanton was the property of the Countess of Eskdale: that Countess who went to share her husband's exile."

"That enigma is soon explained," replied Smeaton. "I am her son. Heaven send that I be not soon the Master of Keanton indeed! But I much fear it; for my mother has been very ill. As I ask you for much confidence, I must not withhold any part of mine from you; and therefore I tell you the fact at once. But this is a piece of knowledge, dear lady, that you must conceal from Sir John Newark, although he knows the fact; for,

if he finds that I have revealed it to you, it may raise suspicion as to what more I have revealed, which it were well to avoid."

Emmeline mused for a moment or two with her eyes cast down ; and then, looking up again, she said—

" Then your name is not Smeaton really ?"

" No, indeed," he replied. " My name is Eskdale. But let me explain to you. It is not at all an uncommon custom now, amongst the many who have been driven forth by the rebellions and revolutions in this land, to assume a name different from their own when entering the service of foreign states. Thus, while I have been in the Austrian army, warring in Spain and Italy, I took the name of Henry Smeaton, rose in the service under that name, and never dropped it until my father's death, somewhat more than a year ago. I have with me my commission, granted under that name, and many papers and letters,

all addressed to me, or speaking of me, as Colonel Henry Smeaton ; so that the title was not merely assumed for the present occasion.—But here comes your young cousin, I think, to meet us. His fishing expedition, it would seem, is soon over."

"Poor boy!" replied Emmeline. "He is so volatile, he can pursue nothing long. I do not think he is so much without ability as he seems ; for occasionally his thoughts are very bright and fanciful. But it is the power of fixing his attention that he wants. Of that he is utterly devoid, and it is the secret of his great deficiency."

A moment or two after, they were joined by Richard Newark, who exclaimed, in a joyful voice—"I am glad I have found you before my father comes back ; for, after we had fished for an hour, I got in a fright, remembering what he had said about not leaving you, Emmy. So I got a horse, and galloped all the way here, thinking every minute I should see him

riding back with you. So you must hold your tongue, Emmy, and not let him know that I have been away at all."

All conversation now ended for the time between Emmeline and Smeaton ; for the boy's presence was of course a restraint ; and the minds of both rested thoughtfully on the subjects of deeper interest of which they had been lately talking. This continued till they reached the mansion ; but there they found Sir John Newark had not yet returned ; and some time was destined to pass before he again appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER IX.

EMMELINE had retired to change her dress. Richard had gone, Heaven knows whither ; and Smeaton, after pausing for a few minutes in the hall, seemingly very busy in examining the suits of old armour which had hung there since the days of Elizabeth, but in reality seeing none of them with the mind's eye, though he moved round from one to the other merely like a piece of mechanism, at length walked up the stairs

to the two rooms which, as I have said, had been appropriated to his use.

We must draw the curtain of the breast and look in; not perhaps tracing thought by thought—who can, even when he looks into his own heart?—but giving such glimpses as may show sufficiently what was passing within.

“This is unfortunate,” he said to himself; “and I must resist such feelings—yet, why? I cannot answer why. She is very, very beautiful, graceful, gentle, bright, unsullied by this foul and dusty world in which we live. Why should I doubt or hesitate? Because my own sensations take me by surprise, and I feel myself led on by impulse rather than by reason. But what does boasted Reason do for us in such things as these? More frequently she misleads than directs us rightly. I will let things take their course. It is but my own happiness I peril; and, without perilling it, I cannot serve Emmeline as I could wish; nay, nor fully

keep my promise.—I will risk it. Perhaps these sensations will wear away. I remember when I thought myself desperately in love with the Spanish girl, the poor Cura's niece, at Valencia; and it ended in disgust: I do not think it will do so here. Then it was but sleepy black eyes, and a warm sunny cheek, and a neat boddice, and a pretty foot—with passion enough in all conscience, but neither soul nor mind. No, no! Emmeline is very different—yet it may wear off. If I have thought much of her—dreamed of her, I may say, by day and night since I have known her—it is very natural, without love having anything to do with it. Her strange fate, the wrong that has been done her, the greater wrong, I fear, intended her, the eager desire to free her from this thraldom, and to open her mind to her own history—and yet the difficulty of so doing—may all well have created an interest independent of love. Yet she is very beautiful and very charming. There is something win-

ning in that smile, half tender, half playful ; and certainly Nature in its happiest leisure never moulded a form of more exquisite symmetry. It makes one's heart beat almost to gaze upon her, surpassing far the highest effort of the sculptor's art, and full of living graces which neither sculptor's chisel nor painter's brush could ever catch or portray.—Hark ! she is singing !—Ay, a well-remembered song of my young days. Her chamber must be near this, from the distinctness of the sounds."

" Mellow year, mellow year,
The winter time is near
With its frost, and its snow, and its wind ;
When the branches are all bare,
And tempests load the air,
And icy chains the dancing rivers bind."

The song ceased ; and the light accompaniment of a lute or mandolin ceased likewise. It seemed but a little outburst of that spirit of music which is in almost

every young heart ; and Smeaton said to himself—"I will sing her the next stanza. Perhaps she does not know it." And with a rich, mellow, tenor voice, he went on with the song, thus :—

" But the Spring, the bright Spring,
On his green-embroidered wing,
Is speeding from the South all the while ;
Scatt'ring flowers on Winter's way,
And repairing all decay,
And teaching tearful eyes again to smile."

He listened for a moment ; but all was silent ; and then, opening the door of his room, he descended again to the saloon. He had hardly been there a moment, when Emmeline joined him, with a bright, frank smile upon her face, saying, as she entered—

" You have been singing—and one of my dear old nursery songs."

" You left it incomplete," replied Smeaton ; " and, as it is one of *my* dear

old nursery songs too, I felt myself called upon for its honour to add the last stanza —at least, the last that I remember ; for I believe there are several more."

"Oh, yes," replied Emmeline. "I will sing them all to you some evening, though Sir John Newark is not very fond of music. Are you ?"

"I do not know what life would be without it," replied Smeaton. "Mine, I know, would have lost many of its few happy hours."

"And does your wife like music? And does she sing often? And has she a good voice?" exclaimed Emmeline, putting question upon question before her companion could answer. But a gay smile upon Smeaton's lips stopped her at length.

"My wife, dear lady!" he said, half laughing. "My wife! I hope she will sing, if I am ever fortunate enough to have one; but, up to the present hour, certainly, I have no wife."

Emmeline looked astonished, almost frightened ; and, for a moment, she stood, gazing in his face in silence, and then said, in a slow and hesitating manner—

“ Sir John Newark told me you had a wife.”

“ Did he, indeed ?” asked Smeaton, with a smile, not unmixed with a look of astonishment ; but, the moment after, he asked—“ Now, I remember, there was conversation between us regarding Lady Eskdale. He must have changed my mother into my wife, it seems, which is contrary, dear lady, to the law of all lands. He pressed the subject upon me, I recollect ; and I gave him very short answers, not thinking fit to enter upon my own or my mother’s affairs with him. I imagined that he wished to discover what we intended to do with Keanton ; but he has led himself into a great mistake ; for I have no wife, I can assure you, dear lady.”

Emmeline was agitated, she knew not

why. Indeed she did not ask herself. All that she felt was that her heart beat more quickly than usual ; that a change seemed to have come over her thoughts and feelings in an instant ; that all was altered in the relations between her and her companion. It seemed very strange to her : it confused her, even seemed to alarm her ; and, with eager quickness, memory ran back over all that had passed between her and Smeaton, as though to ascertain if she had committed no fault towards him under the mistake into which she had been led. She remembered that he had twice called her Emmeline ; and she recollects more than once that a look of admiration had come upon his face, when his eyes were turned towards her, the very memory of which deepened the colour in her cheek. She was very young and very inexperienced ; and the discovery she had made, filled her with many emotions which she strove not to disentangle or to scan, but which, though agitating,

were certainly not painful. She remained so long silent, however, busied in these thoughts, that Smeaton himself was somewhat pained.

“She has been only thus bright and frank with me,” he thought, “because she believed me to be a married man ; and in all the signs of dawning regard which I fancied her looks and words betrayed, I have been mistaken.”

Man’s heart, however, is a very dark and intricate thing. Solomon and a great many other personages have affirmed this, and I believe it. There is nothing which spurs love on like a little difficulty ; and Smeaton, who, a few minute’s before, had been doubting whether he was really falling in love at all, and whether he ought to say or do anything which might tend to win her affection, had no longer the least doubt on the subject. He did not pause long to consider ; but, taking her hand in his, he said :

“Emmeline, you have been deceived by

Sir John's representation ; but does this make any difference in your confidence and regard ? Will you not trust me—will you not rely upon me, though I be unmarried as much as you would freely have done, had the tale you heard been true ?"

She did not attempt to withdraw her hand from his, but raised her beautiful eyes to his face, asking, simply :

" Ought I ?"

" Why not ?" he exclaimed. " Could my having a wife make me more a man of honour ? Could it render me more anxious to serve you—to free you from a painful, a difficult, a dangerous situation ? Could it make you more safe than in trusting to my word as a gentleman and a Christian to use all my efforts for your service, and for the promotion of your happiness alone ?"

" No, oh, no," answered Emmeline, in reply to his eager questions ; but he still went on, saying :

" Would it not rather throw difficulties

in our way? Might it not produce a thousand embarrassments, whereas, if any now occur, you can yourself remove them by a few short words?"

The meaning of the last part of the sentence seemed clear enough; and, after a time, it came back to her memory; but at the moment, confused by a variety of feelings, to her new and strange, and of thoughts which seemed only to become more entangled every moment, she replied:

"I have so little experience—I am so ignorant of how I ought to act, or even what I ought to think, that—"

She paused, unable to conclude the sentence, but, seeing a look of pain on his face, she laid her hand gently upon his, saying :

"Do not let me grieve you. I would not do so for the world. I have the utmost trust, the utmost confidence in you, and will show it frankly. But add this to all your other kindness : tell me truly and

sincerely how I ought to act, what I ought to do ; and I will do it. Guide me, guide me, noble friend ; for I feel that I have none to whom I can look for guidance but you."

The tears rose in her eyes as she spoke ; and Smeaton, with a look which could not alarm or agitate her, bent his head and pressed his lips upon her hand.

" I will be your guide, dear Emmeline," he said ; " and so God help me as I seek, in guiding you, your own happiness, your own safety, before any other other objects whatsoever."

Emmeline raised her eyes to his face, full of bright drops ; and his words and that answering look formed a bond between them for life.

There are instincts far stronger, far clearer, far truer, than any conclusion of reason or any deduction from experience. The shrewd, the cunning, the hackneyed in the world do well not to trust to them ;

for in the first two classes, Nature having endowed them with other qualities for their guidance and defence, in general denies them these instincts, just as she denies horns to a lion, and claws to an elephant : they are provided, and want not farther help : and, with the hackneyed man of the world, if ever possessed of such instincts, they are soon worn out, and the traces of them obscured. But, with the guileless and inexperienced, they are a sure, and often the only, guide and defence.

The same instinctive feeling of dread and doubt which taught her to shrink from Sir John Newark, which barred all confidence and checked all affection, made her heart spring to meet the friendship—perhaps I might call it by a tenderer name—of Smeaton, and long to pour out all its feelings and thoughts before him. The agitation of new sensations, however, checked her for the time ; and all she said was :

" Oh, how happy it is to have some one in whom we can wholly trust and rely!"

That was a blessed moment for Smeaton. It was to the affection which had sprung up, and was budding in his heart, like the soft beams of a bright morning sun upon an opening rose, teaching it to expand in all its full sweetness ; and he gazed upon her with a look of love which could not be mistaken. Of words there was little need ; yet words trembled on his lips which could never be unsaid. Suddenly Emmeline, with a start, withdrew her hand from his. They had thought themselves, throughout the whole scene, alone ; but it was not so. The windows were partly open to admit the balmy air ; and, though they did not descend to the ground, as modern windows do, yet they were not raised more than a foot or two above the level of the terrace without. For the last two or three minutes, a figure had been standing at the angle of the most westerly window, and looking in,

half hidden by the stone-work. It now moved across towards the great door ; and the shadow that it cast upon the floor of the room roused Emmeline from her dreams of happiness, with a sensation of fear.

“ What is the matter ? ” exclaimed Smeaton, surprised by her sudden start.

“ Some one passed across the window , ” replied Emmeline, with the colour mounting warmly into her cheek.

“ Was it Sir John Newark ? ” asked Smeaton, while a cloud came over his brow. “ If so, a full explanation must come before it is desirable.”

“ I think not , ” replied Emmeline. “ The shadow first caught my eye ; and, before I could see distinctly, the figure was gone. Nevertheless, I think it was that of Richard.”

Smeaton mused for a moment and then said,

“ Of course he will tell his father what

he may have seen and overheard ; and we must take our determination accordingly, Emmeline."

"I do not think he will," said Emmeline, eagerly ; but she paused at the next sentence, adding, more slowly, as if not knowing well how to express what she meant without some violation of propriety : "Very few persons here, I believe, are inclined to tell my guardian anything unless he asks. Why it is, I am sure I do not know, for he is very kind in most things ; yet they seem to fear him, and do not like to say what they think lest they should make mischief. Some of the servants, indeed, but not many even of them, report to him all that passes under their eyes ; but I have never dared to speak freely with him upon any thing ; and, I believe, Richard feels the same. Hark ! there is his foot coming through the great hall. It must have been he who was looking through the window. Poor boy ! he would never

think of repeating anything which he thought could pain me ; but I ought not to ask him to conceal any thing from his father."

"Certainly not," replied Smeaton, frankly. "Let things take their course ; only ascertain as soon as possible what he really does do ; and, in the mean time, dear Emeline, let me beseech you to cast away all restraint towards me. It is needful to you and to your own future fate now ; and I feel it is needful to me and my happiness, that you should give me every opportunity of speaking to you, consulting with you, advising you in private. Though *I*, perhaps, must find the opportunities, you must aid me to take advantage of them. Much must be decided within the next two or three weeks ; and upon what is decided, all the future course of your life will depend—and mine also," he added, in a lower voice. "Ay, and of mine also."

Before she could reply, the latch of the

door was raised ; and Richard Newark entered the room, with a slow and thoughtful pace, very different from his light irregular walk. Emmeline drew a step back ; but Smeaton remained exactly where he was, without the slightest change of look or manner, while the boy advanced into the room, humming to himself the snatch of some old song, as if wrapped up in his own thoughts, and hardly conscious that anybody was there.

" Well, Richard," said Smeaton, " where have you been wandering ? "

" I have been upon the terrace for the last five minutes," replied the lad, simply.

" That I know," rejoined Smeaton. " We saw your shadow on the floor."

" Indeed ! " exclaimed Richard Newark, evidently with some surprise. " I thought you did not see me ; but this preposterous knob between my two shoulders, filled with all sorts of things that never get into

other people's heads, betrays me, I suppose, wherever I go. Well, never mind! What matters it to me if nightingales will sit and sing on the edge of a hawk's nest? It is no matter of mine; and I can keep things to myself as well as my elders and my betters. Only, 'ware the springe, noble Colonel. Woodcocks have put their necks into a noose before now."

Emmeline and her lover, for so I think I may now venture to call him, looked at each other, as if uncertain how to act; but then, starting forward, with her wild grace, the beautiful girl laid her hand upon her cousin's arm, saying—

"Do you not love me, Richard? Have you not said that, if you were my brother, you could not love me more?"

The boy's whole manner was changed in a moment.

"That I do, Emmeline," he cried, catching her hand in his, and holding out his other hand to Smeaton. "I love you both, and

will do anything I can to serve you. Trust to me, trust to me, and don't be a bit afraid. I will find means to help you at a pinch. I know that my brain is somewhat askew; but that is not my fault; and there is some wit within, though it lies in odd corners. For your sake, Emmeline, and for yours too, Smeaton, I will rummage it out, and try if I cannot make it serviceable. I will do you no harm, if I cannot do you good."

"Take care of that, Richard," said Smeaton, gravely.

The boy nodded his head significantly, and then added, with a loud laugh—

"And now I will be odder than ever, to cover what is going on within; but I can tell you, dear girl, that I have rendered you one service this morning, already; for if *I* had not been at the window, somebody else would."

"Who?" exclaimed Emmeline, with a look of apprehension.

"Old Mrs. Culpepper was going out for

her evening airing," replied the boy, smiling, "with her stealthy, tiptoe step, like a cat crossing the greensward on a dewy morning. She tended this way, Emmy; but, when she saw me lolling against the window-frame, she crept off to prowl in another direction. She watches you all the while she is purring round you, more closely than you know; and it is better to have me there than her, I can tell you."

"I am sure it is, Richard," answered Emmeline. "But what you say surprises and shocks me. I did not know that I required watching by any one. So Heaven help me, as I desire and seek no wrong, but only to be as rightly happy as it is God's will I should be."

"No more does a tit-lark, Emmy," replied the boy; "and yet they shut him up in an iron cage, and only give him a bit of turf to make him remember how joyful he would be if he could spread his freed wings, and soar away up into the sky."

There was something in the simile which touched Emmeline to the heart; her eyes filled with tears; and, darting away, she quitted the room, leaving Smeaton and Richard Newark together.

CHAPTER X.

SIR JOHN NEWARK rode away towards Exeter. At first, he went fast; for the thoughts with which he set out were not altogether devoid of uneasiness. He did not like leaving Emmeline, Richard, and Smeaton together. Not that there was any definite cause in his mind for the unpleasant sensations that he felt; but, with most men of his character, there is throughout the whole of life a pervading feeling of insecurity which is a hard price, taken at

the full sum, and which by slow instalments they pay sooner or later for any advantages obtained by cunning, duplicity, and deceit. They are never secure. They are always afraid of discovery and loss. The house they have built is based upon sand, and they know that it is so. There is an ever-present dread, a dark consciousness of the sword suspended by a hair over them. They may drown the thought in wine; they may out roar the small, still voice in revelry and merriment; by laughter and by song, they may strive to keep its sounds from their ears; but still it is speaking in the secret tribunal of the heart—ever, ever speaking, accusing, condemning, threatening.

There were times, of course, when this sensation of insecurity was more strong than at others : he never felt safe when Emmeline was left alone with anybody but one of his own creatures ; and there was something in the character and demeanour of Smeaton which made him feel that he

might be very dangerous to dishonest purposes, if he had a knowledge of them. He quieted himself, however, in some degree, by a belief in his ignorance. He said to himself—

“ It is evident he knows nothing of these people, except by hear-say. Moreover, he cannot suspect anything from what he has seen here. He beholds nothing but kindness and affection. I treat her as a daughter, a beloved daughter. No, no, he can suspect nothing. Yet I have seen a light come up into his eyes when he looks upon her, a bland, fond smile upon his lip, which is strange for so short an acquaintance. It is natural, perhaps ; for she is certainly very pretty ; but he is married, so there can be no harm. Yet suppose his wife were to die ?—Well then, I must shut my gates against him. That is all. He cannot force his way in, unless I choose to let him. Perhaps I may make something of this Keanton property, if one could but get him to entangle himself a

little more against the government. He would be glad enough to take a small sum from a friend for that which was likely to be forfeited to the crown. It is a fine estate, full three thousand a year, and carries, if I mistake not, the barony with it. These troubles must be productive of good, if one knew how to take advantage of them."

This train of thought carried him on further, and away from the subject of his apprehensions. He had been riding fast in order to return speedily; but now he slackened his pace, and proceeded to consider deliberately the condition of the times, the position of the existing government, and especially the state of that part of the country in which he dwelt. He was one of those men—and they are a somewhat numerous class—who are skilful at angling in troubled waters. He was well inclined to stir those waters, too, for the purpose of catching more fish ; but he was very careful not to plunge into them too

deeply himself. He knew, as well as any agitator of the present day, how to keep just on the right side of law, how to prompt without acting, how to suggest without proposing, how to make dissuasion act as a persuasive, how, in fact, to stir up rebellion without being a rebel, and to act a traitor's part without incurring the punishment of a traitor. He had, moreover, that great skill which consists in leading men, whom you are openly engaged in opposing, to believe that you may be induced by favours to support them ; in fact, to put yourself up for sale at a high price, and to force it from the purchaser by annoyance ; not to ticket or label the article with the sum demanded, but to let it be understood. This is the most useful of arts in the mercenary world we dwell in ; and men do contrive to enact such tricks, and yet bear an unblushing front and a proud carriage, as if the honours and rewards they obtain were yielded to merit, not necessity. In his most vehement tirades

against a minister or a government, Sir John could drop some few favourable words to show that he was not hopelessly adverse. He could praise one set of measures while he declaimed against others. He could affect uncertainty with regard to some of their lines of policy. He could pretend to believe the motives good, but the means mistaken. He could single out one man from a ministry, when he saw him falling, and pursue him with the most virulent rancour in order to attribute all the bad acts of his colleagues to him, if they choose to purchase his support after the other's fall.

He was not at all singular. We see such men every day; and, all the time, they are independent men. The very excess of their trimming, when managed skilfully, gains for them, amongst those who do not see deeply into the human heart, a reputation for conscientiousness. They are supposed to sacrifice their friends for their convictions, and to change their convic-

tions from their judgment. Verily, they are wise in their generation.

“This dynasty will stand,” said Sir John Newark, to himself. “Yes, it will stand. It may not have the affections of the nation—doubtless, it has not; but it has the passions and prejudices of Englishmen—ay, and their good, sober sense too. Love is a mad passion that will not be subservient. Prejudice is a sturdy beast, which will be guided any way, so that it get home at last. There is no lack of zeal amongst the Jacobites. Zeal! Heaven keep us from zeal. It is like a skyrocket, which no one can direct. The Whigs have something better than zeal. They have firmness, consistence, unity, common sense, energy. Then they have the words, that sooner or later rule the multitude — liberty — freedom — rights — privileges ; and those not the rights and privileges of the few, but of the many. The others have nothing but zeal. Heaven help us! And courage—ay, and courage!

There is no lack of courage ; but with it, luckily, its usual adjuncts, wild rashness, pig-headed obstinacy, and a mighty host of all those brilliant qualities which, sooner or later, bring a party to destruction. Nevertheless, I must be somewhat of a Jacobite for the time—with caution—with caution. I must give a few hints to the people—some encouragement, also, to my Jacobite friends amongst the magistracy, for fear of the vigorous energy of the Whigs frightening them ; but with many a saving clause, and much reservation.”

With these thoughts, he rode on, and, at the end of a few hours, entered the good old town of Exeter, with dusty dress, and horses and attendants tired.

A good number of people were collected in the open space near the cathedral ; for the room in which the magistrates were called to assemble, was not far distant ; and a rumour of the meeting had spread

through the city, that being market-day, and had caused some agitation in the place. Sir John Newark was well known in Exeter ; and he was very popular—most rogues are. His name was soon pronounced among the people. They gathered round him, pressed upon his horse, cheered him, asked him questions. The sounds reached some of his fellow magistrates, who had collected in the neighbouring inns ; and they came out to see what was the matter. The great body of people gathered together were decidedly Jacobite ; and the magistrates, who had their eyes upon the knight, were of the opposite faction ; but he managed skilfully between them. To those in the crowd near him, whom he knew, he spoke a few words of a very inflammatory nature ; but, when the people called upon him to speak to them aloud, he harangued them for a few minutes, from his horse's back, in language which suggested more than it expressed.

He besought them to be peaceable, orderly, tranquil, and to make no disturbances ; but he painted, in glowing colours, and with much oratorical power, the disturbances which had taken place in other parts of the country, told them how the men of Dorchester had assaulted and pumped upon the magistrates, when reading a proclamation from the government ; how, in another place, they had burnt in effigy, "the great personage, whom they very improperly called the Elector of Hanover;" how they had driven a party of the military out of one town, and forced the mayor in another to drink King James's health against his will. But, all the time, he besought them to abstain from such unseemly demonstrations of the popular feeling, and assured them that he doubted not, he trusted, he hoped, they would ultimately obtain all they could rightly desire, without any recourse to violence or breach of the law.

His words were not many ; but they were very well chosen ; and, at the end of his harangue, a great number of the people escorted him to his inn with acclamations. The very inn he selected marked him out as one of the party to which, for the time, he chose to attach himself. It was called the Crown and Sceptre, and was the Jacobite inn. There, however, he had but time to get some scanty refreshment for himself before the hour of meeting ; and, leaving his horses and servants behind, he walked to the room where the magistrates were now fast assembling. It presented the usual aspect of such congregations in troublous times, where many persons of the most opposite views are collected to carry out measures in regard to which very few of them are agreed. The Jacobite party was here by far the least numerous ; but they were weakened by want of unity in their plans, more than by want of numerical strength. Some were for bold and vig-

orous demonstration ; others were for firm and tranquil moderation ; some were for temporising and deceiving, others for throwing off disguise, and avowing their principles, if not their objects, clearly. Sir John Newark instantly ranged himself amongst them, with the most hearty contempt for every one of them ; but he shook hands with them all warmly, lent an eager ear to what every man whispered to him, and said a few words in reply, which signified nothing.

The Whig party, on the contrary, were united in object and in purpose. They felt their strength, and were confident in it ; yet, at the same time, the entrance of Sir John Newark caused a little stir even amongst *them*. They had a sort of fear of him—not of his power, not of his real talents, not of his courage or energy, but of his subtlety ; for subtlety can be carried to a point where it becomes awful. He had established a reputation of never forgiving, of never being turned from his

object by any difficulty or opposition, and of seeking it by ways which could not be seen and by means which could not be combatted. All that he said or did was a matter of doubt and mystery to those around. His frankness was as suspicious as his reserve ; his boldest declarations in favour of a cause were known never to insure it his support ; his most resolute opposition to a party gave no guarantee that he would not join it next day. It was known, moreover, that most of his enemies had been ruined by some means or other—and many of his friends.

Inimical critics will say, perhaps, that this character is overdrawn ; friendly critics will declare that it is a portrait. To the latter, if there be guilt, I plead guilty ; but it is the portrait of one who lived and died in the times of which I write, and not of any man now living.

If a meeting of country magistrates in the present day is irregular and desultory in all its proceedings—and I, as one of

that worshipful body, can certify such is the case—if, in a time when artisans are competent to judge of legislation, and people, who can neither read nor write, rule or overrule the opinions of educated men—if, in such a time, we see that many public assemblies, called for the discussion of national and important questions, are very confused and sometimes violent in their discussions and conduct—what could be expected, in the beginning of the last century, when learning and information, if not wit and talent, were confined to the few? Strong native common sense occasionally, in individuals, did a great deal; and perhaps the cases were more frequent than now; for no one can look around him without admitting that, in the present day, common sense in certain quarters is the most uncommon of all things. It is more valuable than any other quality, and very valuable things are rare.

The course of proceedings on the present occasion was in somewhat the following order. The presiding magistrate, a verbose pursy man, with that self-important air and voluminous stomach which carry great weight with the public, made a long speech about matters which he did not comprehend in the least, read some letters from the Secretary of State and other high personages, the sense of which he mangled and left nearly extinct in the reading, and then added comments in support of the course which he believed the minister to recommend, although in truth it was very different. Then got up a furious Jacobite, railed at the existing order of things, abused the government, spoke of the country being eaten up by foreigners, and asked how it could be expected that, in such circumstances, and devoured by Hanover rats, men should be at all energetic or active in defence of a state of things which the whole country only tolerated for a time. Another and another

orator followed. Few of the saner Whigs spoke at all ; but some of them showed a good deal of temper ; one plan was proposed, and then another ; nothing was decided ; and nothing seemed likely to be decided. Then, when he saw that time was getting on, and that people would soon become anxious to return to their homes, Sir John Newark rose and addressed the meeting, presuming that no one was likely to speak after him. He said :

“Sir, I believe my loyalty is not at all suspected—”

A murmur ran amongst the Whigs ; and he instantly took advantage of it.

“I do not in the least pretend to deny,” he continued, “that I am, personally, strongly attached to the ancient royal line of this kingdom. I have always declared the fact, and I have suffered by it in many ways ; but that surely can be no imputation upon my loyalty, when I always show myself ready to obey and to execute the laws. I stand in the same position as many others

even on that side of the room, whose attachment to the house of Stuart is strong but their attachment to the laws of the realm stronger. I gave what poor support I could to the government of King William and Queen Mary, because I thought that the rights and liberties of Englishmen required it of me ; but I am not disposed, and I trust none here are disposed, to see those rights and liberties violated by one monarch more than by another. Now, as far as I can make out what is intended by the government—or rather, I should say, what is here proposed by some rash and misguided men, who arrogate to themselves, unauthorised, I am convinced, the task of declaring the views of government—it is intended to call upon the magistrates of the county of Devon to employ measures for quieting imaginary disturbances, and for apprehending persons who may be tranquilly passing from place to place on their own business, for aught that has been shown to the contrary,
which would render us a nation of spies

and bailiffs, be subversive of all personal as well as political liberty, and breed suspicion and distrust between man and man, so as inevitably to end in establishing within these realms a despotism as oppressive as can be found in any of the continental states. Against this, I must and will protest, even if I stand alone; at the same time declaring my willingness and readiness to employ every constitutional means in my power to maintain the peace of the land and the rule of order and law. Do not let us suffer ourselves to be agitated by idle rumours and vain and groundless apprehensions. What proofs have we that any design is on foot for disturbing the peace of the realm, or attempting to overthrow the existing government. What signs of such things are even alleged? Why, no more than the shouting of a London mob round the carriage of the Earl of Oxford, whom, until he is tried and condemned by his peers, I may venture to call a very estimable and intel-

ligent nobleman. Some drunken rioting of prentice-boys and coal-heavers, worthy of being repressed by parish beadle and chastised by flogging, rather than being opposed by regular soldiers, and punished by military execution. The sousing in a horse-pond of some foolish and obnoxious magistrates, probably detested and scorned by the multitude rather for their stupidity and injustice than even for their hotheaded zeal upon the present occasion—zeal which we shall not do well to imitate lest we incur the same contempt and share the same retribution.”

“ The *only* signs !” exclaimed one of the less discreet of the Whig gentlemen present. “ What do you call, arming ships on the coast of France in favour of the Pretender, as stated in the Secretary of State’s letter, which you have heard read ?”

“ That it is a case to be dealt with by our Ambassador at the court of France,” replied Sir John Newark, adroitly ; “ and

not by a body of country justices of the peace. Besides, what have we to do with Secretary of State's letters? Is a Secretary of State, King, Lords, and Commons at once? and can his mandate supersede the law of the land? All that it is competent for him to do is to exhort us to diligence and activity in the exercise of those functions entrusted to us by the constitution. Arming on the coast of France! What has that to do with gentlemen travelling peaceably from town to town in the county of Devon?"

"But the Secretary says there are suspected persons," replied the same magistrate.

"By whom suspected?" demanded Sir John Newark. "Reasonable cause must be shown for suspicion before we can deal with the case. This Mr. Secretary may be of a naturally suspicious disposition. He may suspect me—you—any of us. But it would be a bold thing to apprehend a man merely upon a Secretary's *suspicion*. I,

for one, will issue no warrant against any man upon mere suspicion. I will have it shown, what are the grounds of that suspicion."

"He did not deal with his own relations so tenderly," said one of the magistrates to another ; and a third observed, aloud—

"All we know is, Sir John, that three or four persons, whom nobody knows, have lately passed through certain parts of the county and taken their way towards Ale Head, if not towards Ale Manor House. A foreign vessel also was seen upon the coast ; and it is certain that she landed and took off some persons in the close vicinity of your dwelling."

"I should like to ask the worshipful knight whether there is not a suspected person in his house at the present moment," cried some one, in a loud tone.

Others were going on in the same strain; for, on all such occasions, when one person can be found to lead an attack against an individual, many more will follow. Per-

haps Sir John Newark was a little staggered by this close questioning ; but he saw that the allusion to the ship gave him an advantage ; and, waving his hand, he exclaimed—

“ One at a time, gentlemen, one at a time, if you please. You are becoming a little personal in matters which should be considered free from all personality ; but I am ready to give every man his answer.”

“ The best answer to such insinuations is the sword,” observed an old, hot-headed cavalier, whose brains the snow of sixty years had not been able to cool.

“ Poo, poo!” said Sir John Newark. “ I repeat that I am ready to answer every question separately ; but you must not overwhelm me with too many at once. First, then. If any suspected persons have journeyed towards Ale Manor by land, I know nothing about them, and have heard nothing of them.”

“ By land! by land!” retorted one of

the opposite party, with a scornful laugh.

“Wait a minute,” said Sir John Newark, sneeringly. “Next, I answer that I well know that a foreign vessel did appear upon the coast, and did land and take off again some men.”

“Tell us if they were *all* taken off, Sir John,” shouted one of his opponents from the other side of the room.

“If the gentleman who spoke can prove that one of them remained and can bring him within my grasp, I will pay him down on the spot a hundred guineas, which is somewhat more than the reward of an ordinary thief-taker,” replied the knight. “But what is the use of disputing with a thick-headed brawler who cannot hear a sentence to the end? I say, sirs, I *do* know that such a ship appeared off the coast, landed men, and took them off again. I know it well; for I know it to my cost. She came, with what intentions I do not

know. She landed men, whose only act, if not their only object, was to insult and endeavour to kidnap my young ward, Emmeline ; and they ran away as swift as they could, and re-embarked when frustrated, pursued by my son and servants, with dogs, as if they had been beasts of prey. I was myself from home at the town of Axminster ; but, as soon as I heard that a strange sail had appeared upon the coast, I hurried back at full speed, and found that what I could have wished done, had been well done in my absence. Now, I will ask if any one of you who ventures to call himself the most loyal in this room, can impugn my conduct in this affair ? And I repeat that, if any of you will put into my hands one of those men who landed, so that I might bring him to justice for the insult he offered to my ward, and through her to myself, I will pay him a hundred guineas on the spot."

At this moment, a dark, stern-looking, elderly man, in a snuff-coloured coat, who

had hitherto sat quietly in a corner of the room, rose, and said—just when Sir John Newark was congratulating himself on having avoided all mention of Smeaton's residence in his house—

“The worshipful knight has not answered the question, whether there is or is not a suspected person, at this very time, staying at Ale Manor.”

“No one, suspected in the least by me,” replied Sir John Newark, who saw that he must grapple with the subject. “There is a gentleman staying at my house ; but let me add that he it is who saved my young ward from the hands of those ruffians who landed, wounding one of them severely, and that his whole conduct, as far as I know anything of it, is above suspicion. General, you are a brave man, as all the world knows ; but I should like to see the bravest of you tell my guest, Colonel Henry Smeaton, that he suspected him of aught. Methinks he would soon have an answer that would satisfy him

till the end of his life, even if he lived much longer."

"Perhaps so," replied the other, quite calmly ; "but some questions are better decided by pens than by swords, Sir John. Although I have not given up fighting, and trust I may yet fight again in my country's cause, it certainly shall not be in a private quarrel upon public matters. You say that this gentleman's name is Colonel Henry Smeaton. I should much like to know if he never bears any other name."

"By such only have I known him," replied Sir John Newark, with a slight inclination of the head, and without the least change of complexion ; for he never coloured, though he sometimes turned pale.

"Then we have been misinformed, I suppose," replied the other, whose voice seemed to have quieted all the din going on around. "We were told that the Earl of Eskdale was staying at Ale Manor, Sir

John. Is it fair to ask you who first introduced this gentleman to you as Colonel Henry Smeaton?"

"I presume I am not under examination," replied Sir John Newark, a good deal annoyed, but determined to evade the question. "However, General, I have no objection to answer you; and, if you think fit, you may take down my reply, perhaps to be used against me on a future occasion."

He spoke with a sneering smile, which had not the slightest effect upon the gentleman whom he addressed, and who continued to look straight in his face, till he went on, saying—

"You asked me, I think, who first introduced my visitor to me as Colonel Henry Smeaton. My reply shall be very simple, and more distinct even than your question. The first time I ever saw him, he introduced himself to me as Colonel Henry Smeaton. That was some weeks ago in London; and I immediately,

and on the spot, gave him an invitation to visit me at Ale Manor. I intended to excite your surprise, and I see that I have done it, gentlemen ; but I must now dispel that pleasant sensation. My first acquaintance with this gentleman occurred on his defending my son from a gross assault made upon him by one of the Earl of Stair's servants, and punishing the ruffian who had knocked the boy down. I was grateful to my son's preserver and avenger, and invited him to my house ; but I have had more cause for gratitude since. Not content with punishing the man on the spot, Colonel Smeaton went that same night to the Earl of Stair, with whom he is well acquainted, and made it his request that the man should be immediately dismissed. Out of friendship for him, the Earl readily acceded ; and, behaving with that true honour and dignity which so well becomes him, wrote me a letter, which I have here, to apologise for what his man had done, and inform me of the result. I

think, General, you must be well acquainted with Lord Stair's writing. There is the letter."

He stretched forth his hand with the letter as he spoke ; and the old officer, advancing a step, took it, and read it aloud. The following were the contents.

"SIR,

"In answer to your note received this morning, I beg to inform you that the conduct which you complain of in Thomas Hardy, my late servant, was represented to me fully by my friend, Colonel Henry Smeaton, who called upon me last night. As he witnessed the whole transaction, and I have every reason to believe him, from my personal knowledge of his character, and old acquaintance with his family, to be a man of perfect probity and honour, I dismissed the footman at once, and beg to express my regret that a servant of mine should have

committed so disgraceful an action. I trust the young gentleman whom he assaulted has not suffered any severe injury, and that, when my friend, Colonel Smeaton, returns from the visit which I find he intends to make to your country-house, he will bear me a good report of your son's health.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"STAIR."

"Undoubtedly, Lord Stair's handwriting," said the old officer, aloud; and, turning to another, who stood near, he added, "We must have been misinformed."

"Pray," cried one of the magistrates, "will you tell us, Sir John Newark, if this Colonel Henry Smeaton is the only visitor in your house at the present moment?"

“ This is too bad ! ” exclaimed Sir John Newark, with well-affected indignation. “ Do you suppose, sir, that I am likely to quibble in such a matter as this ? There is no one whatsoever in my house but my own family and domestic servants, with Colonel Smeaton and his lackey—a rude, ordinary man, whom you might as well take for an archangel as a nobleman. It is by such injurious suspicions of loyal and tried men, that you, and such persons as you, frequently produce disaffection. Such, however, shall not be the case with me ; and, having expressed my opinion upon your proceeding, and repelled the insulting doubts which it seems you had thought fit to entertain of myself, I shall leave an objectless meeting, which can produce no good results, and can only tend to irritate the people and induce foolish magistrates to overstep the limits of their duty upon the shallow pretence of zeal. If I might advise, all those who think with me will follow me ; for, I believe, the very fact of

this meeting may do great harm in the county."

Thus saying, he quitted the room with some thirty or five-and-thirty other gentlemen.

A buzz of conversation succeeded amongst those who remained, the whole assembly seeming to conclude that the business of the day was over, and breaking up into little knots of five or six. In one or two of these groups, the name of Sir John Newark was treated somewhat severely, and his general conduct censured with very little restraint. In most of them, however, the imprudence of those who had first commenced an attack upon him was pointedly blamed.

"Strange should not have been so violent," said one.

"Perry should not have insinuated what he did," remarked another.

"He is a very difficult personage to deal with," observed a third. "He is never to be caught, and is always ready to give

back more than he receives in the way of sneers and bitterness."

"He often turns what was intended to annoy him, to his own advantage," remarked a fourth. "The man must be a blockhead or a conceited fellow, who attempts to meddle with him. The best way is to let him quietly say out what he has to say, and then to proceed without taking the least notice of him; but, as he has contrived to break up the business of the day, we had better betake us to our horses' backs."

One dropped away after another till the room was nearly vacant; but a little knot continued in low-toned but eager conversation for nearly three quarters of an hour after all the rest were gone; and in it were the old officer whom we have mentioned, the high sheriff of the county, and two or three gentlemen of importance and discretion.

"It will certainly be the best plan," said the high sheriff. "He is thrown off his guard for the time; and I am willing

to take my share of the responsibility."

The general shook his head.

"He is seldom off his guard," he remarked ; "but I do not fear the responsibility ; and, perhaps, it is the best plan. Government will carry us through, even if we do stretch its authority a little in such a case."

With this observation, the meeting broke up ; and the little knot which had remained, separated.

CHAPTER XI.

THE events which I have narrated in the last chapter, occupied nearly two hours, although, in their recapitulation, they fill so small a space. It was thus four o'clock, or somewhat more, before Sir John Newark reached the door of his inn, impatient to return as soon as possible to the Manor House. As we have seen, many of the party which he had now espoused, followed him away from the place of meeting. Some mounted their horses and rode into

the country ; some strayed to the right or left, as soon as they were in the street ; some went one way, some another ; and but few accompanied Sir John Newark, even a short distance. Sir John was not loved or trusted by any one. All readily availed themselves of his help ; all admired the skill and dexterity with which he took advantage of an enemy's mistakes, and sometimes of a friend's ; but they did not altogether feel safe in his private society.

There was one garrulous old knight, however—a Sir James Mount—who had no fears of any kind. Wrapped up in his talkative egotism, he thought little of the character and actions of his associates, chattered away gaily to any one who came near him, sometimes very sillily, sometimes well enough, and was ever ready with a smart repartee, at which he himself laughed, to lead the chorus right ; and, being full of anecdote and a great gossip-monger, was tolerated and

even courted by most of the gentlemen round, though he sadly wearied them till they had contrived to make him dead drunk. This worthy baronet adhered to the side of Sir John Newark all the way to the inn ; at which, it would seem, he also had put up.

“ You posed them, Sir John—you posed them,” he said, as they issued from the door. “ That smart Mr. Seely got a rap—a rap—a rap, I think. Puppy ! his knuckles will ache. It is very droll that, I am not good at public speaking—at public speaking—at public speaking, for I am fluent enough—fluent enough—fluent enough, in conversation, I think.”

Sir John Newark made no reply ; nor, indeed, was any necessary. Sir James Mount paused for a moment to take breath—for he had been walking fast, with a peculiar dancing-sort of step ; but it was not long before he began again, saying : “ Better times coming, Sir John, better

times coming, I think ; and the king shall have his own again. I dare say, now, you have got some news from over the water —over the water—over the water."

Sir John Newark replied this time ; for a good number of people were in the street ; and Sir James's conversation was getting somewhat dangerous.

"The last news I have heard of any kind, Sir James," he replied, "was that you had nearly pulled down the old house at Mount Place and were building a very splendid mansion in its stead."

"Yes, yes, yes," answered the other, tripping along on the tips of his toes. "*Diruit—diruit—diruit, ædificat mutat quadrata rotundis—rotundis—rotundis.* Not exactly the whole house ; only the wings —only the wings—only the wings."

"Getting yourself new wings, Sir James," said Newark, "will make the people say 'tis to fly with."

"Only to fly higher—to fly higher—to fly higher," replied Mount.

“ Higher, higher, higher !” echoed Sir John Newark, with a cynical smile; “that is like the skylark. But you were born to *mount*; and so that is natural.”

“ True, true, true,” answered his companion, laughing, and very much pleased at the exceedingly lame pun. “ Like the skylark—born to mount—pretty, very pretty !” And he took out his tablets and wrote it down, talking all the time with marvellous perseverance. “ Born to mount,” he repeated three times, “ like the skylark : must have wings, you know, Sir John—must have wings—must have wings. Shall we dine together ? I have something very important—important—important, to discharge my mind of.”

“ I fear that I cannot stay to receive your fire,” replied Sir John Newark. “ You know I have a guest at Ale Manor, and must be back to entertain him.”

“ Ay, that’s just the thing—just the thing—just the thing,” said the old knight.

“ Is he Lord Eskdale, or not—or not—or not ?”

They had at this moment just reached the great arched entrance of the inn ; and, without answering the question, Sir John called aloud for his horses. He was doomed, however, to disappointment and the society of Sir James Mount ; for one of his servants, coming forward, informed him that they had just discovered that one of the horses had lost a shoe, and that his own beast seemed very lame. Sir John Newark was angry ; but he uttered none of the oaths and exclamations common in that day ; and merely, in a thoughtful and moderate tone, directed the one horse to be shod and the other to be examined by a farrier. Sir James Mount instantly fixed upon the servant, commended his own farrier to him, gave him particular directions where to find him, volunteered an opinion upon the cause of the horse’s lameness, without having seen him, and recom-

mended strongly a plaster of soap and boiled turnips, repeating one part of every sentence at least thrice, and sometimes more.

Whilst this was going on, Sir John Newark was meditating what he should next do. It was very difficult, on all occasions, to get rid of Sir James Mount ; and, taking into consideration the improbability of his succeeding in an attempt to do so, and the length of time he should probably be obliged to stay, he made up his mind to engage him to dine in a private room, saying to himself—" I shall, at all events, get from him every piece of news that is going about the country, and shall prevent him from doing mischief with his tongue for an hour and a half at least."

Sir James was delighted with the proposal ; and, although the hour was somewhat late for the early habits of that period, the number of gentlemen who had visited the town in the course of the day

had created great activity at the inn, and dinner was easily procurable.

As soon as it was upon the table in the little parlour to which they were shown, Sir John Newark, who had been kept in some uneasiness by the incessant loquacity of his companion, dismissed the man who brought in the dishes, saying, as soon as he was gone, with a meaning nod, to worthy Sir James—

“ It is better to be alone when we may have important subjects to talk of.”

“ True, true, true,” returned the other. “ In such things, I am always discreet—discreet—discreet. I know how to be silent—silent—silent, Newark. No one can keep a secret better than I can, in case of need. I was just at that moment—at that moment—at that moment, thinking of Lord Eskdale ; but I was as mum as a mouse—mum as a mouse—mum as a mouse, while the man was in the room.”

Sir John Newark had by this time made up his mind as to the course he should

pursue in case of the Earl of Eskdale's name being again mentioned ; and he instantly caught at Sir James's words, saying,

" Ay, the Earl of Eskdale. Can you tell me anything about him ? He must now be advancing in life."

" Poo, poo ! you are thinking of the father," replied Sir James. " He died last year, quite a young man : not fifty, I should think—I should think—I should think—married very early you know, and left one son—know them all quite well—Lady Eskdale is an old friend of mine."

" Is that the young Lady Eskdale or the old Lady Eskdale ?" asked Sir John Newark ; and then, seeing that he had a little betrayed himself, he added, to cover the mistake, " I suppose the young lord is married."

" Married—married—married ! Oh dear, no. He is not married," said Sir James ; " was not a month ago, at all events : I was over the water upon a little business—business—business. I could not see the

old lady, because she was very ill in bed—in bed—in bed ; but I inquired into all the particulars of the family, and found them better off than most over there, on account of the Keanton estate—estate—estate."

Sir John Newark was not a little puzzled and alarmed by his worshipful companion's words, and fell into deep thought ; but, as the other paused, he said, mechanically, merely to fill up the gap—"Ay, about Keanton ?"

"Why, you know," answered Sir James, in his usual rapid manner, "it was never forfeited, because it was settled upon *her*. People thought that she had dissuaded her husband from joining our friends. That was not true ; but it saved her property, which was settled somehow—somehow—somehow, and they have taken care to keep it very quiet. The tenants pay their rents to an agent—an agent—an agent, and as little said as possible ; for, although Shrewsbury spared them, out of generosity,

and Marlborough because he got something by it, I dare say, others might have made a snatch at Keanton, which is better than a penny loaf—a penny loaf—a penny loaf."

"But, I suppose, if the old lady should die, the property would fall to the Crown?" said Sir John Newark, becoming again interested.

"Oh, no! oh, dear no!" replied Sir James. "The young man was a mere boy when the father was attainted; and, as they had good interest with the late Queen, they got a special act of grace in his favor. It is not generally known; but it is true—true—true, I can assure you. So he is right on both sides of the house. If King James comes and prospers, he'll get the Scotch estates and this too; and, if the Elector makes his hold good, and Eskdale keeps quiet, he'll get Keanton at all events."

"It is a fine property, and might be made better," said Sir John Newark.

"Yes—yes—yes," rejoined the other

knight. "I know it well. It is not ten miles from me. Know every inch of it—very good ground—too much up and down—overrun with wood; but very good tenants—all of them strong loyalists. We might call them all out in a moment of need. But so, this is not the young lord at your house, after all?"

"I only know him as Colonel Smeaton," said John Newark, thoughtfully; for the intelligence he had received, produced some vacillation in his mind. "You heard, too, what Lord Stair said of him. Nevertheless, he has all the air and manner of a nobleman; however, Lord Stair would not I should think—"

"That is nothing—nothing—nothing," interrupted Mount. "*Nom-de-guerre* perhaps. I recollect he did take some name like that when serving with the Austrian troops in Spain and Italy. That is nothing. Lord Stair is a very shrewd, secret man—would not tell tales of his own friends,

desperate Whig as he is. He knows better than that. I should like to see this young man. Tell you in a minute who he is—who he is—who he is."

As Sir John had not fully made up his mind, he took no notice of this broad hint, and Sir James did not receive an invitation to Ale Manor. What he had heard, however, induced the former to hurry his departure at any cost; and, after a few minutes more, spent in conversation, eating and drinking, he called for his chief groom, and inquired for the report of the farrier. That report was unfavourable; the beast would not be in a condition to travel for two or three days; and, taking leave of Sir James Mount, Sir John Newark instantly proceeded to purchase a new horse in order to set out for Ale Manor at once.

Before all this could be accomplished, the saddles put on, and every preparation made, it was nearly seven o'clock; and the knight looked forward to

being obliged to end his journey in darkness. He was well accompanied, however, for those were somewhat dangerous times ; and, before he was quite out of the city of Exeter, he found that he was destined to have more companions. Coming at full speed down the street, Sir James Mount, followed by two servants, overtook him about a hundred yards beyond the old gates, much to the other's annoyance.

"I will ride with you as far as Aleton Church," said Sir James. "It is only five miles out of my way—out of my way—out of my way ; and we can talk as we go. There is something I want to tell you in your ear. Come close—put down your head.—Do you know," he continued, in a whisper, "a party of horse, under Captain Smallpiece, has just gone out of the town with Best, the justice ; and they are right upon the road before us, as if they were going either to your house or mine—or mine—or mine ? We had better reconnoi-

tre them from the tops of the hills, and see which way they take. It would not be pleasant to be at home when such a visit happens."

"Certainly not," returned Sir John Newark, though, to speak truth, he did not exactly mean what he said. He had his own views, however ; and he rode on by the side of his chattering companion, buried in thought.

"They are gone to Ale to see for my young guest," he thought. "If he is apprehended, it will serve him right for deceiving me about his marriage. Ay, and it may drive him, though somewhat too fast, on the way I would have him go. If I could but find a means of giving him an intimation to keep out of the way for a time, before the military arrive at Ale, it would do very well. But the party will never let me pass them ; and, if I traverse the hills with all these men, we shall be discovered. This babbling old ass, who is not contented with saying a foolish thing

without repeating it thrice, would ruin any scheme he had to do with. It would be better to seem to humour him, and to follow his suggestion of reconnoitring. They must stop to water their horses somewhere ; and, perhaps, we can pass them then."

Thus thinking, he rode on up the slope of a hill in front, and soon after caught sight of the party of horse winding through the valley below. Well acquainted with every step of the country, he was enabled to follow them unseen amongst the green lanes and hedge-rows, keeping a wary eye upon them all the way, while Sir James Mount continued to pour a perpetual stream of idle prattle into his ear, which annoyed him without distracting his attention from the object in view. The troop went more slowly indeed than suited the wishes or purposes of Sir John Newark ; but at length they began to ascend towards the steep, bare downs which ran along the sea-coast, on the borders of Devonshire and

Dorset. The manœuvres of the reconnoitring party now became more difficult ; for, though the road was often cut between deep banks, it was often exposed upon the bare side of the hill ; and worthy Sir James became very unruly. He had no diffidence of his own powers, and he would at once have taken the command of an army, although he had never seen a cannon fired in all his life ; nor was he willing at all to submit to the cooler discretion of his companion, who sought to pass quietly through the hollow ways, while those whom they were following crossed the more open ground, and to gallop over the wide, exposed downs, while the soldiers were hidden by any cut or dip in the road. Struggling with these difficulties as best he might, Sir John Newark, with his companions, came in sight of the little church of Aleton, with the scattered hamlet below, just as the setting sun was spreading a thin veil of purple light over the broad, naked face of the hill. The soldiers had then reached

the straggling houses of the village; and, to the surprise of all who watched them, they were seen, not only taking the bits out of their horses' mouths, but removing the saddles, as if they intended to remain there all night.

Sir James Mount was full of conjectures as to their purposes; but Sir John Newark's resolution was soon taken, and he exclaimed—

“ Well, I cannot remain watching them all night, and I do not intend to slink into my own house by a back way. If you will take my advice, Sir James, you will ride away by the short cut over the hills. I shall go on and talk with them.”

He saw a little hesitation in his elderly companion's face, and to put an end to it, he added—

“ For my own part, I have nothing to fear. But I think that journey of yours ‘over the water,’ as you call it, may prove unpleasant in its results. We could not well spare you just at present.”

"No, that must not be—must not be—must not be. I think—I think—I think I had better go. You keep them talking, Sir John, while I gallop over the hills. They cannot chase me, now, for their saddles are off. But, upon my life I believe they are putting them on again. Good-bye—good-bye!"

And away Sir James went, as fast as he could go, while his companion slowly rode on towards the hamlet.

At some little distance from the houses, Sir John Newark beckoned up one of the servants, on whom he thought he could most rely, and said, in a low voice—

"It is probable that I may stay here some time. You contrive to get away as soon as it is quite dark. Ride on to the house, and tell Colonel Smeaton, in my name, that I think it will be better for him to be out of the way for a few hours. Tell old Mrs. Culpepper to put him where he can lie concealed; and if he is inquired for,

let it be said that he is gone away for a few days."

The servant nodded his head quietly, and Sir John rode on.

Round the door of the little public-house was gathered a group of five or six soldiers, already taking deep draughts of ale ; and, dismounting, the knight exclaimed—

" Holloa, my men, what has brought you into this part of the world ? We are seldom treated with such a sight, here."

" I don't know, sir," answered one of the men, civilly ; " but Captain Smallpiece is in-doors, taking a glass to comfort him, with the Justice."

" Are you going to halt long ?" asked Sir John Newark, in a careless tone. " I shall be glad of your escort, if you are going my way."

" An hour and a half, sir, to feed and rest the horses," replied the man. Having so far satisfied himself, Sir John Newark entered the inn, and walked straight into the only guest-chamber it possessed.

The justice and the Captain, not being able to obtain wine, were discussing the contents of a small bowl of punch, apparently much to their satisfaction, when the unexpected appearance of Sir John Newark startled them in their potations.

“Why, Sir John!” exclaimed the magistrate, “we thought you were at Ale Manor, by this time.”

“You made a mistake, gentlemen,” said Sir John Newark, drily. “I had business which detained me in Exeter. But may I ask what is the meaning of all this military display, which ‘startles the land from its propriety?’ Here, drawer, bring me some punch. My horses are so tired they can go no farther, just yet; and I may as well enjoy this worshipful society in the approved manner.”

The Justice looked at the Captain, and the Captain looked at the Justice; but at length, the latter replied—

“Why, the truth is, Sir John, we were going to pay *you* a visit at Ale Manor; and

luckily having met with you here, we trust that we shall have the pleasure of your company on the road."

"That depends upon circumstances, gentlemen," observed the other quite calmly.

"If you have business with me, it can probably be transacted here as well as at my house."

"Not exactly," answered Justice Best. "The fact is this: the high sheriff and several of our brother magistrates are not quite satisfied in regard to this servant of Colonel Henry Smeaton. They think you may have been deceived, Sir John. It is very easy, you know, to assume a rude and vulgar manner; and, having received very distinct information that the Earl of Eskdale, whom we all know to have been attainted in King William's reign, took his way towards your house, they imagine that this servant may be the man; and they wish him to be apprehended on suspicion."

Sir John Newark laughed aloud.

“ What need of a troop of soldiers to arrest a single lackey ?” he asked.

“ Why, your fishermen in the village are said to be somewhat mutinous,” replied the Justice ; “ and, in case of resistance, you know—”

“ You do not suppose, sir, that I would resist or countenance resistance to lawful authority ?” interrupted Sir John Newark. “ But, if this mare’s nest is so very important a one, I think you might have ridden on to find it, without stopping at this house to drink punch.”

“ We had another little business here, besides,” rejoined the Justice, who stood in some awe of Newark ; “ but our doing so has procured us the advantage, I hope, of your company on the way.”

“ Nothing of the kind, sir,” retorted Sir John, sharply. “ I certainly shall not go with you to see a gentleman, my guest, and the intimate friend of my Lord Stair, insulted in my house, by the pretence

that his servant is the Earl of Eskdale, forsooth ! You may go on when you please. I shall stay here till this unpleasant business is over. But let me warn you that it be conducted legally ; for it shall be strictly looked to, depend upon it."

As he spoke, a man entered with a leathern apron, a dirty face, a bowl of punch in one hand, and a tallow candle in the other ; for, by this time, night was falling fast. Sir John Newark's eyes rested on him, for an instant, and a confused, doubtful sort of sensation took possession of him, which we all of us feel when we see a face that we know but to which we cannot affix a name. Suddenly, however, the scene of the statuary's house in London came back upon his mind ; and the round, odd-shaped, never-to-be-forgotten form of Van Noost, was there before him, in a disguise partaking somewhat of the tapster and somewhat of the blacksmith. A single glance of intelligence passed from one face to the

other ; but not a word of recognition was uttered. Van Noost set down the candle and the bowl, went back to the tap for a fresh ladle and glass ; and then, rolling out of the room, closed the door behind him,

CHAPTER XII.

FROM the turbulent scene amongst the magistrates at Exeter, and the somewhat annoying occurrences which Sir John Newark had met with on the road back, let us turn to the quieter doings at Ale Manor House.

Not long was Emmeline's absence from Smeaton and her young cousin. She came timidly, blushingly, in all the agitation of fresh and strong feelings ; but she soon became more tranquil. Dinner,

according to the directions of Sir John Newark when he left, was served at the usual hour ; and, when it was over, all three walked out to linger away the time in the summer eventide.

After two or three turns up and down the terrace, Richard Newark seated himself upon one of the large guard-stones which marked the separation of the gravel from the turf, from which he commanded a view of two faces of the house ; and there he remained for more than an hour, whistling lightly, and apparently lost in thought. Emmeline and Smeaton continued to walk up and down side by side ; and their conversation was carried on in tones too low to be heard from the windows of the house. Had any one been watching them, well skilled in the outward signs and symptoms of the sweet madness, he might have divined by the look of tenderness, by the sudden changes of expression, by Smeaton's bended head, by Emmeline's faltering and agitated step, and by the

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frequent raising of a bright and sparkling look to her companion's face, that he talked of love, and that she listened to him, well pleased.

So, indeed, it was. He led her on, step by step, word by word, himself led on by the growing passion in his own heart. All was said between them which could be said ; and, before that walk was half over, they were plighted to each other, not only in heart and affection, but by words and vows. It might be somewhat sudden ; but—as I have endeavoured often enough before to make the reader comprehend—there is no such thing as time. The flowing of events constitutes what we call time. The revolution of the earth round its axis—man's day—is the measure which we have capriciously adopted to mete the passing stream ; but how inadequate is that measure to express the value of the thing measured ! 'Tis just as if we should sell at the same price the yard of cloth of gold and the yard of dull

serge. The events of one day are not more like the events of another than those two woofs. Thoughts and feelings are also events—the events of the mind and soul ; and, measured by them, how long a space had Smeaton known Emmeline ! The last four-and-twenty hours to both had been a life-time. Cleared of the great mistake regarding time, they had not loved suddenly.

In the little scene which I have depicted—the two lovers walking to and fro within sight of the house—sometimes under the green trees, it is true, but more often upon the soft turf before the terrace —Richard Newark, sitting whistling on the guardstone—the sky putting on its evening raiment, and the purple draperies of the sun's couch being shaken down over the west,—one thing was particularly worth remark ; namely, the marvellous patience of the boy. He, so light, so volatile, so full of wild activity, sat quietly there the whole time. It is difficult to explain it ; and I can but say, in explanation, that he

did it without thought, in all simplicity. The mind might not be very bright or clear ; it might be slightly warped from the right direction ; but the heart went as straight as an arrow. He felt that Emmeline would like to be alone with Smeaton, and he with her ; and, loving them both right well, by an impulse—by an instinct with which thought had nothing to do—he not only left them by themselves, but watched that they were not interrupted ; and with love, like that of a faithful dog, he watched patiently.

At length, however, Richard Newark rose, and, with a quick step, joined the two lovers. He had seen some one coming round the other angle of the house ; and he said, with a laugh—

“ There is old Mrs. Culpepper upon the prowl again, Emmy. Take care, pretty bird, take care. That cat’s steps are very stealthy.”

Emmeline, brighter, but as simple as himself, replied,

"I do not fear her, Dick—I do not fear anything now."

Oh, what a world of revelation was in that little word, *now!* It spoke of feelings totally changed—of hope and trust and confidence sprung up—of the absorption, as it were, of her very being into the being of another—of the vast assurance with which woman's heart reposes upon love.

Richard Newark did not remark it; but Smeaton felt it, and was very happy; for it told him how completely she was his own. They continued their walk, and caught a glimpse of the old woman's figure moving quietly along at some little distance; but they heeded it not; and continued talking in a lighter strain, and of more indifferent things, but with the spirit that was in their hearts, giving life and energy to their thoughts and words, and breathing tones which each understood as meaning more than the words expressed. There was no weariness for them. The sun sank gradually through

the sky, touched the edge of the horizon, dropped below it, disappeared. Purple, and gold, and grey, had each their moment in the western sky, then gave place, and darkness followed. The stars shone out, bright and clear above, not large, but very lustrous ; and then the moon began to throw her light upward from the east, preparing to sweep the diamond dust of heaven away from her path on high.

Still Emmeline and Smcaton walked on, and talked of everything. Heaven ! how their thoughts rambled, shooting up amongst those stars, flying on fairy wings after the setting sun, wreathing the purple and the gold into fantastic forms, and twining the evening clouds into rosy coronals. Aladdin's palace-builders, all spirits as they were, wrought not so fast or gorgeously as the spirit of love.

But hark ! The sound is heard of a distant horse's feet coming at great speed

along the road, and the three companions are retiring to the house quickly.

The lights had just been lighted, the windows closed ; and they were seated calmly in the smaller saloon, though two of them were trying to banish from look and manner all trace of the emotions which had risen up in their hearts, when a step was heard in the marble-hall without, the door opened, and a servant of Sir John Newark entered, followed by the old housekeeper. The man was dusty from the road ; and eager haste was upon his face, as he advanced close to Smeaton to avoid being obliged to speak loud.

“Sir John has sent me, sir,” he said, “to tell you there is danger abroad, and to say that he begs you to keep out of the way for a short time. Mrs. Culpepper will show you a place where no one can find you ; and you had better seek it quickly.”

Smeaton gazed at him with some surprise, but without much emotion.

“What is the matter, my good friend?” he said. “I have nothing to fear that I know of. I really do not see what can be the use of my concealing myself; for I have committed no offence, and know not that any one can wish me ill. What is it has alarmed Sir John?”

“I really do not know the whole, sir,” replied the man; “but I heard they had a very stormy meeting at Exeter, and that a party of horse was sent out in the evening towards this place. We followed them close, and watched them all along as far as Aleton. There, Sir John stopped, I dare say, to try and keep them as long as possible, while I came on to give you warning.”

Smeaton laughed, notwithstanding the anxiety which he saw in the countenance of Emmeline.

“My good friend, Sir John,” he said, “mistakes altogether my position. I have nothing to fear from troops of horse, nor

from bodies of magistrates. They may subject me to some little annoyance, perhaps ; but that is all they can do ; and I do not think it either needful or dignified to conceal myself. If discovered, as I probably should be, the very fact of my concealment would justify suspicion and look like guilt."

"Perhaps, sir," said the old housekeeper, in that quiet, plausible tone, which is so very common to housekeepers, "Sir John may request you to do this for his own sake more than yours. He may have denied at Exeter, perhaps, that there is any such gentleman here."

Smeaton looked her full in the face, thinking that she was not paying any high compliment to her master's sincerity and truthfulness, and trying to discover from her countenance whether there was not some latent motive for the course suggested which she did not choose to explain. It was all blank, however ; smooth,

calm, and inexpressive ; and, unable to make anything of it, he replied—

“ That alters the question greatly ; for I suppose you do not speak without some knowledge, my good lady. However, my best course will be, in such circumstances, to mount my horse and ride away for a time. If I meet with any of these gentry, they must take me if they please ; but I should not like to be discovered lurking like a rat in a hole,”

Emmeline looked at him sadly, almost reproachfully, as if she would fain have asked :

“ Will you leave me so soon, and peril your own safety thereby ?”

But the old housekeeper observed, quietly,

“ There is not the slightest chance of discovery, sir. I could place you in the priest’s chamber, where they say that Henry Garnet, who was afterwards hanged, drawn, and quartered, lay for six whole weeks without being found out, nearly a century ago. There is a way out from it,

too, beyond the house: so that, if you heard the door above open, you could get down through the wood to Ale, and away for France in a fisherman's boat. Sir John, in case of need, would take good care to have a boat ready and the way clear."

Smeaton changed his mind in a moment; for the woman's words gave rise to considerations which she little anticipated or knew. He was still of the same opinion indeed that, boldly to face inquiry and to meet those who were sent after him, would be the best course for his own safety ; for he was well aware that he had nothing to fear from straightforward conduct; but he reflected, at the same time, that, by so doing, he might curtail his stay in the same house with Emmeline ; and he moreover foresaw that a time might come, when the knowledge of such a secret entrance to Ale Manor House might be serviceable in more ways than one.

These thoughts passed through his mind in a moment; but, before he answered,

both Emmeline and Richard Newark had time to speak.

"I beseech you, be guided, Colonel Smeaton," said the young lady, trying to conceal, as far as possible from the eyes of the housekeeper the feelings of her heart. "Depend upon it, my guardian has good cause for his advice."

"Oh, show it to me, show it to me, Mrs. Culpepper," exclaimed Richard Smeaton, alluding to the chamber and passage she spoke of.

"I must not, Master Richard," replied the old woman, in a familiar tone. "It is not a secret to be trusted to such a rattle-pate as yours. You and Miss Emmeline must both remain behind, if the gentleman consents to go, which I think he had better do."

"Well, fair lady," said Smeaton, addressing Emmeline, "as you wish it, I will consent, although against my own better judgment. Perhaps Sir John Newark may, after all, have more information

than we know ; and, as I believe him to be a very shrewd and prudent man and to wish me well, I will follow his counsel. I will leave a private message for him with you and Richard. I will follow you in an instant, Mrs, Culpepper ;” and he then added, in a lower tone : “ Send the man away ; and wait for me a moment without. I will follow you directly.”

She only replied by a low curtsey, and retired from the room, closing the door behind her.

“ Now, Richard,” continued Smeaton, in a whisper, “ endeavour to see which way she takes me ; and, if you can discover, tell our dear Emmeline. Whercver the door of this chamber is, I will come to it from time to time ; and if I hear a voice I know, I will give such intimation of where it is that you can easily find it.”

“ I will find it out, I will find it out,” answered the boy, laughing. “ I will watch the old cat every step that she takes for the next three days, as cunningly as she

ever watched any one. She must carry you food."

"I hope so," replied Smeaton, with a smile. "But be careful; and now farewell."

He found Mrs. Culpepper quite as near the door as was discreet; but, if she had been listening, she was disappointed; for the conversation within the saloon could not be heard.

"Now, Sir," she said, in a low voice, "tread lightly, that they may not hear our steps. This way, if you please, sir."

She led him through the hall, up the large flight of steps to the floor above, past the doors of his own apartments and those of Emmeline, and then up a small staircase of five or six steps to a large, old-fashioned room, fitted up in the style of Queen Elizabeth's days. On one side was an immense bed with green velvet draperies and canopy, having a plume of feathers like a hearse at each corner; and on

the opposite side, the deep-cut windows with a sort of bench of black oak between them. A number of large pictures hung round the room, none of which, however, descended to the floor ; and there was a huge fire-place on the left hand side, which occupied so much space that it seemed impossible there could be any means of exit there. The door by which they entered was in the middle of another wall ; and the panelling seemed heavy and solid.

“Now, sir,” said the old lady, closing the door, “You would never find the way in, I think, if I did not show you.”

“Perhaps, a little examination would discover it,” replied Smeaton. “I have been in countries, madam, where such secret places are very common.”

“I think I might defy you, sir,” she said.

“Perhaps, it is here,” said Smeaton, approaching the black oak bench, and press-

ing on various parts of the picture frame above. "These walls are thick enough to contain a small chamber."

The old woman smiled ; and he went on pressing more tightly upon the frame, and thinking that he felt it yield a little. At length, he heard the click of a spring ; and the frame, moving upon a hinge, came slowly forward at one side, showing a room or closet within, of about five feet in width, by ten or twelve in length, raised a foot or two from the floor.

"Well, that is strange!" cried Mrs. Culpepper. "I never saw that before. It must be done for a blind."

"Then, is this not the place?" asked Smeaton.

"Oh, dear, no sir," replied the housekeeper. "You would be stifled in there. The priest's room is as good a one as this ; but that is a good hint to mislead searchers any way. Shut it up, sir ; and I will show you the other. Will you have the

goodness to try and move back the bed—for it is very heavy."

"I will try," said Smeaton ; "but, though I am tolerably strong, I doubt that I shall be able to do it. We do not see such massive furniture now-a-days."

As he spoke, he grasped one of the large posts, and endeavoured to stir the huge bedstead. It moved not in the least, however ; and the old housekeeper stood near the head, holding the light and smiling at his ineffectual efforts. Smeaton remarked her countenance, and the peculiar expression which it bore. He saw also, that she leaned her right hand against the post at the top of the bed. Approaching her then, with a gay laugh, he said—

"I think I have your secret ;" but on pushing back the velvet hangings from the spot upon which her hand rested, he could only perceive one of two immense iron

screws which fastened the bed, apparently immovably, to the wall behind it. He made one more effort, however, to move the bed, but in vain, and then laughingly gave it up, saying : " I must trust to your guidance, madam."

" Dear me," replied the old woman, " I thought you must be stronger than I am ; but let me try." And, putting her hand gently to the head post, with hardly an effort, she made the huge bed roll round upon its casters like a heavy door, still remaining attached to the wall on one side, but quite free on the other. When it was thus removed, the fluted velvet back of the bed still remained fastened against the wall ; but it might now be easily seen that this was a door which opened without difficulty.

Smeaton drew it back and looked into a large and comfortable room. But he was not a man to shut himself up in a place, from which he did not know the means of exit ; and he was running his eye rapidly

both over the wall and the back of the bed, when the old lady said—

“ You see, sir, this thing that looks like a great bed screw, is, in fact, a catch, which runs into the post and fastens with a spring. To get into the room, you must press the plate upon the post through which it passes ; and, at the same time, pull up the screw. Without that, no force on earth would move it. But, the moment you do that, the bed of itself moves forward a little, the catch is thrown off, and you can easily roll it round.”

“ That is the way in,” replied Smeaton ; “ but now, my good lady, tell me the way out. How am I to unfasten the bed when once you have rolled it back ?”

“ That is more easily done than the other,” replied the old woman. “ Look here. This iron bar, made like a screw, passes quite through the beam, with a long handle on the other side, and is fixed upon a pivot. You have nothing to do but to push down the handle, when the catch will be

thrown off, and the bed will move an inch or two, so as to prevent it from fastening again. There is, somewhere in there, a block of wood—a sort of rest which you can put under the handle ; and then nobody can undo it from the outside without pulling the whole to pieces. I come in here four times every year by myself to see that everything is in order, and that all moves easily. But we must not wait talking. I will show you the way, sir.”

And she stepped over the skirting board which was left plain below the opening of the door.

“ You see, sir,” she continued, pointing to a number of small loop-holes, both round and square, on one side of the room, “ you will have plenty both of light and air ; and there is no fear of any body seeing the light even if you made a bon-fire here ; for those holes are hidden by the stone work round Miss Emmeline’s windows on the one side, and by the same round the windows of the room we have just left on

the other. I will bring you some supper and anything you may want out of your room as soon as it is all safe ; but you had better not come out yourself till I come and tell you ; for I do not know how you would pull back the bed again if you were forced to retreat."

" Then show me the other way out which you mentioned," said Smeaton. " I am not very fond of rat-traps ; and stories of these secret chambers get abroad about the country. So that people may know more of the way in hither than you believe."

A look of hesitation came upon good Mrs. Culpepper's face, which instantly gave way to her usual smooth expression ; and she said, " There is no fear of that, sir. Nobody knows anything of this room but myself and Sir John. I had better go now and make all right below ; and I can show you the other way out when I bring your supper."

" No, indeed, my good lady," replied Smeaton, in a determined tone. " You

must show me now, or I certainly shall not stay. That piece of mechanism might get embarrassed. I might hear people breaking in. A thousand things might happen to make my discovery here inevitable, if I did not know the other way ; and I will not be caught lurking here. If you please, you shall show me now."

" Oh, very well, sir, very well," replied the house-keeper. " It is very easily found. Be so good as to follow me."

Passing through a door to the left of the loop-holes, she led him through a passage, curiously constructed in the wall between the upper and lower row of windows. As soon as it had passed beneath what Smeaton conceived to be the windows of Emeline's room, came a very narrow flight of stairs, and then another passage. Again came a second descent, steep but broader than the first, which led to what seemed to have been originally a cellar, arched over in brickwork and of no great extent. Beyond it was a long passage, evidently under-

ground, and gently sloping downward till the whole was closed with a stone door in which was a key-hole.

“The key always lies there, sir,” said Mrs. Culpepper, pointing to a little niche ; “but I must tell you that, when you open the door, there is, just before you, the well, which you must step over to get out, or you might drown yourself. It is an old well with an arch over it, the water of which is thought good for sore eyes : so that the people come here often on a morning to get it ; and, when you stand on this side of the door, you may hear all they say as they gossip round the well. The right hand path leads away through the wood at the back of the village to the bay : the left takes round again to the terrace in front of the house ; but that is well nigh a quarter of a mile off ; and no horses can come round here ; for the hill is too steep.”

Smeaton did not promise himself any great entertainment from overhearing the

gossiping of the fishermen's wives and daughters, but quietly followed his guide back again to the room above. She there left her light with him, passed through the aperture, closed the door; and he could hear her roll back the bed, and the catch click upon the spring.

END OF VOL. I.

